

Hurricane Island [Diddy x Dixie]

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/50723710) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/50723710>.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warning:	Graphic Depictions Of Violence
Category:	F/M
Fandoms:	Donkey Kong Country , Donkey Kong (Video Games)
Relationship:	Diddy Kong/Dixie Kong
Characters:	Diddy Kong , Dixie Kong , Original Characters , Original Human Character(s) , Donkey Kong , Tiny Kong , Chunky Kong , Dinky "Kiddy" Kong , OC - Character
Additional Tags:	Romance , Action/Adventure , Drama , Drama & Romance , Monkeys , Original Character(s) , Tragedy , Angst and Tragedy , Angst and Romance , Circus , Islands , Jungle , Action & Romance , Adventure & Romance , Childhood , Young Love , First Love , Crimes & Criminals
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2023-10-10 Completed: 2024-05-25 Words: 541,889 Chapters: 106/106

Hurricane Island [Diddy x Dixie]

by [LucyM22](#)

Summary

After his adventure with Donkey against King K. Rool, Diddy would resume his normal life on DK Island... except for having to return to Kong Kollege, where he is tormented by a quartet of bully children. Fearing their threats, Diddy doesn't dare to report his situation.

One day, he meets and befriends Dixie, Tiny, Kiddy and Chunky, a family of young Kongs, who arrived on DK Island fleeing a gang of criminal apes.

Diddy begins to have a special friendship with Dixie, who later joins Kong Kollege.

The friendship between the two of them begins to grow until feelings for each other begin to arise, which become stronger over time.

Their frustrated attempts to confess their feelings will lead them to live an unexpected journey and rescue mission, away from DK Island, which will trigger a series of obstacles and conflicts that will put their relationship, their return to DK Island, and even their lives at risk... Showing them that not everything always turns out as one expects.

©All characters in the Kong family and the Kremlings are from Nintendo. The OC characters are my own.

Recommendations and Warnings

THIS IS THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THE FANFIC "LA ISLA DEL HURACÁN", originally written in Spanish.

Hello!

This is my first fanfic. Diddy Kong and Dixie Kong are some of my favorite characters, so I've wanted to do a story about them for a long time :3

This fanfic was born as a random idea for the years 2015 and 2016, and in December 2016 I started writing it, but... I abandoned it the first week. It was in mid-2019 that I took it seriously again, and it took me practically 4 years to finish and correct it, and well... Here it is :)

Before start, I think I should warn a few things from the beginning about this story:

-I speak Spanish, so this fanfic was originally written in that language. So, I apologize in advance if my English and grammar have errors or any word or phrase have not been translated correctly. (Even if you speak English, you can correct me if you want).

-I wrote this fanfic just for **fun**, so I'm not an expert in writing stories.

-It contains some **clichés**, including some that everyone may **not like**, such as misunderstandings. (I say this because some tweets on this topic made me feel so bad -.-)

-The story is extensive, **very extensive**. To be exact, it has **105 chapters**! So, if you're going to read it, I ask you very, very **much patience** with the plot. Just as there will be nice scenes, there will also be frustrating scenes. But at the end of the story, **everything is resolved**.

-There are **short and long chapters**. In general, the most extensive chapters are usually of some battle or a backstory of importance. When I write "long chapter", it means that it will have about 10k words or more.

-The story takes place in the time between **DKC and DKC2**.

-This story is mostly a **headcanon of mine**, so it's a story apart from the games, and there may be scenarios a little out of place (not so much, but they will be like cities, circuses, other islands).

-It contains **Original Characters (OC)**, mostly groups of villains and extra characters. Even humans.

-I'm sorry if this is a bad point, but... **there are no kremlings**. Obviously, they do exist and are mentioned here; they just don't participate in this story. This in order **not to affect the story of the**

games, since in my headcanon they will reappear in **DKC2**.

-The story is about **Diddy and Dixie**, so they are the ones who will have the **prominence** unlike the rest of kongs. It's an exclusive journey **of the two of them**.

-While it's a **romance** story, it's also **an action** story, so the plot gets a little out of control and there can be things a little bit... dark.

-The language and several things are harmless, however, **it also contains strong scenes and situations, violent battles and fights, very sad stories and certain dark contexts**, I mean it, so take this into account so that you read it under your responsibility. For this reason, I left it in *Teen and Up Audiences* classification.

-Well... it contains **things like this**:



Don't be scared, it's not them who will be like this, but the evil characters will be.

-Something special that I want to mention in this English version: this story was originally written in a **family-friendly language and without swear words**. So, if you come across a bad word, it could be a translation problem or that the insults used in Spanish have another meaning in the English language.

-The facts, situations, names of characters are all **fictitious and particular**, so any resemblance to reality is coincidence. And I also want to apologize if some topic I don't know how to handle in the best way.

-In the prologue you may not understand the context, but **later** you will. You can skip it, but I still recommend that you read it.

-And finally, **don't spoil it for yourselves**, I mean it. Read the whole story in **order**.

Now, without more to say, enjoy reading if you will do it :)

Started: August 2019

Ended: November 26, 2022

End of corrections: July 29, 2023

Publication started (original): May 10, 2023

End of publication (original): August 21, 2023

Publication started (English): October 10, 2023

End of publication (English): May 24, 2024

**Also published on Wattpad and Fanfiction.net*

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Prologue: A Stealthy Escape

Chapter Summary

7 years ago...

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The famous *Chimp Cirque* circus, recognized and prestigious by thousands of people who live in a big city. Almost every week, the numerous stands of the venue were occupied by an entire crowd arriving to see the long-awaited shows.

The artists, acrobats, jugglers, trapeze artists and contortionists were without a doubt the stars of the night and, in the middle of these presentations, there were also those of animals, who with their exotic appearance and their particular skills, earned the greatest attention and appreciation by viewers.

There was a wide variety of animals living there, although for the most part, *Chimp Cirque* was inhabited by primates, as its name indicated. The primates often came out on stage to exhibit their most talented acrobatics or even realize an improvised performance as in the cases of primate children. These last always earned the most tender looks from the public, as was the case with a little girl chimpanzee, who seemed to have unique hair with beginner flight skills.

On a day like any other, there was a family of primates in their respective room of that circus. It was a young chimpanzee couple with a baby girl of their species. They were also part of the circus performances, although they had had a season of rest due to the birth of their new daughter. They had lived there for years, like the other primates, and their days seemed to be quite calm... except for that particular day: the last day... that they were going to continue in that place.

The aforementioned baby chimpanzee was in the arms of her mother, who smiled at her and made gestures of affection, but who at the same time... looked at her with some concern. Next to her, there was also the father, who had a lowered gaze and remained pensive; it was as if an uncertainty was accompanying them.

"What will we do after all this?" the chimpanzee mother asked her husband, who then placed a hand on his temple, before looking up to respond.

"We'll have to find a way to survive," he responded, showing serious concern. "But I know it's going to be the best, even if we have to... start a new life out there."

"A new life..." the mother chimpanzee repeated to herself, as she looked at her little baby again. "And without knowing what may become of our destiny."

"I know, honey. And I understand, I know it's going to be... difficult to adapt," the father chimpanzee responded, before going to hug his wife. "But even so, our owners believe that it is the best thing they can do for us by getting us out of here, and even we think the same... We are not

going to allow those other maniac humans to take our babies by force, the three children, in fact. And I know this is going to be complicated: leaving our entire life here behind. But... I want to think that we will achieve to be well, that we will all be well, like the family that we are... And that our children will be well."

"It's what I wish most, above all," she said as she rested her head on his shoulder, and the little baby chimpanzee looked at them with an innocent smile. "I want to see them grow well and be happy."

Suddenly, small but quick steps began to be heard arriving at that area, accompanied by childish laughter full of energy. A little girl chimpanzee appeared running and jumping, and even wearing her hair in a particular rotating way. The little girl, perhaps three years old, went to hide behind the two adult chimpanzees while she laughed and held up a diamond stone.

"Dixie, but what are you doing?" the father chimpanzee said to the infant, taking her in her arms and removing the diamond she was carrying. "Oh, no, don't play with those stones, you might drop them and you might get hurt."

"But it's very pretty," responded the little chimpanzee, who was the eldest daughter of the couple, with her sweet voice.

"*Dixie!*" suddenly exclaimed a voice apart from the apes present.

Shortly thereafter, a little gorilla boy came running to the scene, who looked exhausted.

"Chunky, but what happened?" the adult chimpanzee asked him, looking at him with some concern.

"Ah, here you are, Dixie," said the gorilla boy, walking towards the little infant chimpanzee, before speaking to the two adults. "Uncle, auntie, I was trying to catch up to Dixie, but she was walking too fast with her hair. She was running through the portal again and carrying that diamond."

"What?! Oh, no, Dixie," exclaimed the little girl's father, staring at her and moving his head from side to side. "I have already told you not to walk through the portal alone now."

"Dixie, honey, we've already told you again," her mother added in the same way. "Don't go out like that while no one is with you."

"Chunky was with me," answered the little girl chimpanzee.

"But Chunky is a child too," the father told her. "And children shouldn't be away from their parents if there is no one else accompanying them."

"But I want to play," the little girl added, making a gesture of supplication. "Why can't I go out now, dad?"

"Because it's dangerous for little ones to go out alone," the adult chimpanzee told, before smiling at her later. "Later there will be time to play as much as you want. Look, I promise you that when we get to that island we will play together, okay?"

"Yeah!" exclaimed the little chimpanzee, launching herself to hug her father, who in turn responded affectionately, earning a smile from the mother.

"But now you promise that you won't go out like that anymore, okay?" her father told her again, before the little girl nodded and he stroked her head. "That's my little girl."

Suddenly, two more primates arrived on the scene. It was another couple made up of a gorilla and a chimpanzee, the latter being the one who had a certain resemblance to the father of the two little girls chimpanzees, implying that they were related. Then, the little gorilla boy joined the two of them, which proved that he was the son of that couple.

"I think everything is almost ready," said the newly arrived adult chimpanzee, in a low tone, but trying to smile at the same time, like the other couple of chimpanzees. "All we have to do is wait for them to call us."

"They said they will take us tomorrow morning," added the adult gorilla, before glancing askance at his son and the two little girls chimpanzees... as if he didn't want to talk too much in front of them. "And I also heard that they are going to take action on it for security."

"I heard it too, and I hope they make it," responded the little girls' father while holding the eldest, who was distracted making funny faces and games to her younger sister, making the latter laugh. "And I hope the other small apes in this circus are not in danger... Eh, I mean, don't run through the portals, I meant," he added with a forced smile and pointing with sidelong glances at the primate children present.

"Hey, but why are we leaving here?" the little gorilla boy asked them, looking worried. "I'm afraid of going to an unknown place, and we won't have shows anymore."

"Chunky, honey, I already told you it's because we'll have a better life outside," his mother told him, placing a hand on his shoulder. "And don't worry, we're all going to stay together. You do not fear."

"Are we going back here?" the little girl chimpanzee asked with an innocent smile. "I want to go out on show again and teach people how to fly with their hair."

"Oh, no, honey, we already told them that we won't be in this place anymore," her father responded, trying to smile back. "But don't worry, you'll be able to play with your hair as much as you want on that island where we're going, okay?" he told her, smiling at her again and caressing her head. The other apes in the family also smiled as they looked at the little girl, although a few seconds later, the four adult primates once again showed worried expressions on their faces. "Well... it seems there is no turning back. Tomorrow we will leave here," the chimpanzee added towards the group.

The next day began before the sun rose for the primate family, where they were being accompanied by a group of human people who looked everywhere as they were carried around the outside of the circus, and even seemed to be in a position to protect the apes. Then, people helped the group of primates into the container of a vehicle, and then said goodbye and seemed much more worried than the apes were. Before leaving, one of the people handed them a box that was filled with diamonds and some shiny stones.

"Take this, please," the person told them, handing them the box. "Take it with you away from here... And take good care of yourselves, okay?... We hope things go well for you and that you can live in peace."

With that, the people closed the doors of the container, and then the vehicle started its engines. The two couples of primates looked at each other with enormous uncertainty, while continuing to hold their respective children, who seemed quite confused, especially the gorilla child.

As the vehicle moved away from the place, the group of people watched with all the uncertainty and sadness for those primates, whom they had had in their custody for years and had given smiles to the public at their shows.

"We hope you stay safe and healthy wherever you go," said one of the people as they continued looking at the vehicle from a long distance. "They won't be found there."

"Will we start the entire legal process from now on?" asked another of the people. "Because those gentlemen will come in the afternoon to ask about the little gorilla and the two little chimpanzees."

"Of course yes, this must be quick, before those stupids arrive," said the first person quite seriously.

"What will happen with the threat?"

"I don't care about their stupid threat and their money, we'll ask for protection from those maniacs," the one added, shaking his head from side to side with firm seriousness. "Those crazy ones! We aren't going to support them for their monstrous project; they got crazy if they thought we were going to give them those three little creatures for that aberration they plan to do. But right now, we will take action and those maniacs will go to prison!" the person finished with complete firmness.

A few days of traveling passed for the primate family, between changes of land and sea vehicle, and being accompanied by another group of people from that circus. The trip had been quite exhausting and boring, especially for the three little apes, who tended to get restless during trips.

After all those exhausting days, the simian family had reached their destination, or at least as far as the people accompanied them. After that, they continued moving on their own in the middle of a jungle, looking for a good area to settle and stay protected. At the front of the herd, and carrying the child gorilla on his back, was the adult gorilla with his wife, who was the one who had the best knowledge about survival in nature. Behind them was the other couple of chimpanzees, each carrying their two little daughters. The four adult primates walked looking everywhere for any danger, and protecting their little children.

Suddenly, in the middle of all the vegetation they were going through, they got a little scare when they found some dark silhouettes near them. They were two subjects with dark capes and hoods who, when they showed their faces a little, saw that they were other primates, who had intimidating looks. The only thing that did not scare the family was that those strange primates were carrying four little infants with them, who were seen calm, but at the same time, clinging to those two mysterious apes. The family looked strangely at those strange primates as they passed by them, in turn they returned the same expression, but then they downplayed it and just continued on their way... until they could find a new place to live.

Meanwhile, those two hooded primates stayed for another few seconds looking at the family, but they also downplayed when they walked away from. Then, they continued walking with their four little primates, who were of different species and looked somewhat fearful, as if they did not want to part with the two of them.

After walking a few meters further, the two mysterious primates were arriving at a huge house, so huge that it seemed to be more of a mansion or a shelter. When they reached the door, they knocked on it and waited for a while, while holding the four little primates. These infants, who appeared to be about three years old, looked at the two adult apes with innocent uncertainty.

Suddenly, the door opened and a voluptuous gorilla lady appeared, with a stern look on her face. She greeted the two hooded apes, one of which revealed his face, who was an orangutan.

"The four new children," said the gorilla lady, directing her gaze at the little apes, who were clinging to the two adult apes and seemed to be afraid of her. "Come this way, please."

With the four little ones in their arms and on their backs, the two apes entered the property and followed that gorilla lady to a large room, which had a view toward several hallways with doors and a yard where there were several young primates of different ages, playing and interacting with each other. Then, the two adult primates left their little children on the ground, and went to talk to the lady, who gave them some sheets to later sign.

"That's all," the gorilla lady told them seriously, receiving the sheets. "Now, you can leave them. The visits will be scheduled at the end of the month, as you said."

Then, the two hooded apes headed towards their little children, who were looking around the place with fearful expressions.

"I want my dad," said one of the little apes, who was a langur species, with a pleading look and moist eyes towards the two adult apes.

"No, no, don't be like that, please," told one of the adult apes in his thick voice. "We already told you four that you are going to stay here while we are gone."

"No, I want to go home," said another of the little apes, who was an orangutan, with the same plea to the ape who had lowered his hood. "I want to go with you, dad."

"Dad has to go to work, you know," the adult orangutan replied. "Plus, we'll come visit you later."

"I don't want to be here," replied another of the little children, who was of the mandrill species. "I want to go home!" he added, starting to tap his feet.

"I want my dad!" exclaimed the little langur again, and began to sob.

"Your dads couldn't come," the other adult ape responded. "They stayed home because they are very busy, just like we are going to be. So please understand..."

"No, I want to leave here!" replied the little orangutan with moist eyes as well and taking the arm of whoever seemed to be his father. "I want to leave!"

"Oh, no, please! Please behave!" the adult orangutan ordered them, speaking more firmly. "We already told you several times that you are going to stay in this place to be taken care of because we have to go to work. And please, I don't want tantrums now!... Well, it's time to go," he concluded before patting the four children on the heads, who then stayed still. "We'll see you later, okay?"

"We'll come to visit you one month later, don't worry," the other adult ape added in the same way.

"Well, see you later, children," the adult orangutan said goodbye, before putting his hood back on and turning around. "Behave well."

The two hooded apes went out from the house, leaving the four little children behind, while the latter only watched them until the end with moistened eyes and fear reflected on their innocent faces.

"Do you think they're going to be okay there?" one of the adult primates asked the other, as they left.

The other adult primate, showing his orangutan face again, looked back one last time, where they had left the four little apes, and then gave a deep sigh.

"It's the only place we found," he responded, showing himself with a look of uncertainty. "But we can't have those children at home anymore; they shouldn't see all those things nor can we tell them anything."

Meanwhile, the four little ape children continued to stare at the now closed door. Suddenly, the little langur ran to the door as if he wanted to get out, but then he just burst into tears, before the other three joined him. The little orangutan and the mandrill were also with tears streaming down their faces, except for the other little child, who was a capuchin monkey and was trying to stay strong, despite also having small tears in his eyes.

"I want my dad!" exclaimed the little langur in the middle of crying.

"Don't cry" the capuchin monkey told him, patting him lightly as if he wanted to console him. "Our dads said they are going to return every month."

"How long is a month?" asked the little mandrill, wiping his eyes.

"I think it's five days," answered the little capuchin monkey.

"Hello," suddenly said another childish voice, apart from the four.

The four children immediately turned around and saw another group of primate children, almost the same age, at whom they looked at them somewhat strangely.

"Are you new here?" one of those children asked them.

"Yes... new ones," answered the little capuchin monkey with some shyness.

"Why is he crying?" a primate little girl from that group asked, pointing towards the little langur.

"Because my dad and our uncle brought us here," answered the little orangutan, before pointing to his other three companions. "Their parents couldn't come."

"Do you want to play a game with us?" another of those children asked them, smiling at them four.

Suddenly, the four ape children began to talk and interact with those other little children, who asked them questions about themselves or suggested certain games to them. Later, the little orangutan began to get a little distracted as he carefully observed all the corridors and shortcuts that were seen in that place, and even began to walk to explore some areas. Finally, he looked out of the windows that overlooked the yards, where there were more primate children, and later, he looked into another yard, but instead in this one, there were older primates, who looked more like teenagers.

"No, no, don't go there!" a child from that other group of little ones suddenly told him. "Don't go into that other yard," she added, pulling him by the arm as if she were a little afraid. "That is the place of older children... Older boys and girls are very evil, very evil," she said with seriousness and fear at the same time.

"Yes, don't step on that yard over there," added another of those children in the same way. "Those older kids hit you and treat you ugly and do evil things to you. And the lady directress will also punish you very ugly."

The four little children, who had reunited again, looked at them with some confusion and as if they did not seem to give importance to what they were saying.

"Come this way, new children," the gorilla lady from that place suddenly exclaimed, heading towards the four of them. "I'm going to show you your room where you should be, and your carers."

Then, the gorilla lady took the hands of the four little apes and gently pushed them to accompany her to the hallways with doors. For their part, the little children just followed her, while maintaining their innocent expressions of uncertainty and looking around the place.

Chapter End Notes

That's it for the prologue (it was a bit long). Surely you did know who the characters in the first part were, but obviously I know that the rest didn't, anyways maybe you'll understand that later.

Chapter 1: Celebration After the Adventure

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The final battle of *Donkey Kong Country*, the one in which Donkey Kong along with his nephew, Diddy Kong, faced the evil king of the Kremlings named K. Rool, who had stolen the precious reserve of bananas, that source of potassium and feeding for the inhabitants of *DK Island*.

... Those who have played *Donkey Kong Country* will already know that story.

This time, we will see another... story.

DK Island, a peaceful island for now, where some species of animals lived, especially several primates also known as *kongs*. At the same time, within this species, there was a particular family... This family was very united; not all of them were blood family, but their friendship showed as if they were:

Cranky, a grumpy old kong; *Wrinkly*, Cranky's wife; *Funky*, an energetic gorilla surfer and pilot; *Candy*, a sweet female gorilla; *Lanky*, a charismatic orangutan; *Swanky*, a gorilla full of luxuries; and we can't forget the famous *Donkey Kong*, the great hero and future ruler of the island; and, last but not least, *Diddy Kong*, a little spider monkey, Donkey's nephew and adventure partner.

Days after that aforementioned battle, some of the members of this Kong family were reunited in front of Donkey Kong's house. Everyone thanked Donkey and his nephew Diddy for having rescued that banana reserve from the reptilian clutches of King K. Rool.

"How nice it's to have our precious banana reserve back," Cranky said as he finished closing the cave where that reserve was stored.

"You two are heroes, we already have our reserve back, thanks to you!" Funky exclaimed excitedly to Donkey and Diddy. "You are the best!"

"Thank you, Funky," Donkey replied, smiling at them. "You know that we always want the good for everyone."

"And as a gesture of gratitude, we'll celebrate a party!" Funky added, jumping with excitement.

This Kong family always liked to celebrate for any reason, no matter how small or big.

"Oh, no, no, no!" Cranky exclaimed, looking contradictory. "No one will have any other party! Not after what happened in the last one!"

Well, unlike the older kong with a white beard and a cane, who was Donkey's grandfather, and who just needed reassurance and liked to compare his old times with the current ones. But even so, he had to tolerate the parties, because most kongs were much younger and more relaxed than him.

"Relax, Grandpa!" Donkey told him with a little laugh. "You got mad that time just because Diddy took your banana dessert by mistake while we were playing dessert war. If you don't want another party, don't go and that's all."

"Now it turns out that you want to exclude me!" Cranky grumbled, raising his cane, about to hit Donkey with his cane.

"But if you just said you don't want a party, then you're just not going," Donkey replied. "Why can't you stop being such an idiot and curmudgeon?"

"Did you call me an idiot?" said Cranky, casting a menacing look at Donkey, before raising his voice in fury. *"DID YOU CALL ME AN IDIOT?!"*

"Oh, no, no, I'm sorry, I didn't mean to say that to you, Cranky!" Donkey exclaimed, looking somewhat regretful. *"WAIT, WAIT!... NOOOOO!"* He shouted before fleeing, seeing that Cranky was chasing him to give him a couple of blows with his cane... and that's how it was. In fact, this type of situation used to be frequent between Cranky and his beloved grandson Donkey.

The day of the party that Funky had planned had arrived and, at dusk, Donkey and Diddy were at his house getting ready to attend. Both kongs lived in a treehouse, where beneath it was the cave that contained the entire reserve of bananas. Donkey had taken care of Diddy for most of his life as if he were a son, since his parents had been victims of a war when he was a very little child. He seemed to be a father to his nephew, although their relationship was more like brothers. Diddy greatly admired Donkey and one day hoped to be a hero like him.

Donkey usually wore only a red tie with his initials; while Diddy was wearing a red sleeveless t-shirt and a cap of the same color, although after his last adventure, he had changed his basic red t-shirt for one of the same model with yellow stars printed on it.

"That Cranky complains about everything, gets angry about everything, everything bothers him and everything seems bad to him," Donkey complained while fixing his hairstyle.

"Just ignore him and let him get angry on his own, that's what I do when he contradicts me," Diddy responded with a shrug as he got ready in front of the mirror. "Oh, and don't answer him in a bad way because you know, you'll earn yourself a good beating."

"Even if I tell him he's the best grandfather in the world, he'll still hit me with his cane," Donkey replied, rolling his eyes. "Hey, buddy, which tie should I go with?" he asked after a while he was looking through his closet.

"But all your ties are the same, Donkey," Diddy replied, placing his hands at his sides and giving a little laugh.

"No, because for this occasion it must be a formal tie," Donkey responded as he took out a different style tie. "This tie doesn't look bad," he added, smiling. "Well, are you ready, little buddy?"

"More than ready!" Diddy responded excitedly.

After finishing getting ready, they both left the house and headed towards the place in the jungle where the party would be celebrated. They both had to look presentable, since they were the stars of the party. This time, their clothing had an elegant style and, as expected, they were excited about the celebration.

When they arrived at the party, they met the other Kongs, who were waiting for them. The place was clear and quite spacious: in the center, there were chairs and tables for the guests, and in front there was a high stage full of lights. The entire atmosphere had a pleasant appearance, and there were already quite a few guests present there.

"Hi! It's about time you arrived, brothers," said Funky, welcoming Donkey and Diddy, shaking each of their hands.

"Hi, Funky, how are you!" Donkey and Diddy responded in the same way.

"This will be awesome!" Funky pointed towards the party. "We have so many guests."

"Oh, really?!" Donkey asked, observing the entire environment from afar. "It all sounds great."

"And it's going to be," Funky added excitedly. "We'll have games and lots of food too, of course."

"Hey, this remains to be seen, it sounds amazing," Donkey responded in the same way. "And who were invited, by the way?"

"Well, all the kongs we know. Obviously to our family and our closest friends, from there also to some good acquaintances of each of us. Oh, yes, we also include your classmates and your little friends from school, Diddy."

"W-what?!" Diddy exclaimed... changing his excited face suddenly. "Uh, I mean... all my classmates?"

"Exactly!" Funky responded, nodding. But suddenly, he changed his face when he noticed a certain strange expression on Diddy. "Why? Couldn't they be invited? I mean, Wrinkly said we should invite them too, and she passed the invitation on to every child in her class."

"Uhhh, well... Yes... yes, of course, there's no problem with them being invited," Diddy responded, showing an apparent forced smile and scratching his head.

"Is something wrong, little buddy?" Donkey asked, frowning when he noticed such an expression on his nephew.

"Uh, no... It's nothing," Diddy replied, keeping his forced smile. "It's just... Uh, I was just surprised that they were invited, that's all."

"And look! Your friends are there," Donkey pointed in the distance to a group of Kong children. "Why don't you go greet them?"

"Well... it could be right now... Or I'd better go see what Lanky is doing," Diddy responded and, without thinking further, he left the conversation as if nothing had happened.

"Okay, little buddy," Donkey said, with a certain strange look at Diddy for his unexpected reaction.

"Hey, it's Donkey Kong!"

Suddenly, more kongs appeared to greet and admire Donkey as the great hero of DK Island. That was to be expected.

"Donkey Kong!"

"Donkey! Do you want to give me your autograph?"

"Oh, okay, okay," Donkey told them, smiling and calming the group of apes. "One by one, okay?"

Donkey began to greet and attend to the requests of each of the kongs that had come to see him, for which he had to be somewhat patient, although it was not complicated for him.

Seconds later, a gorilla girl appeared: Candy Kong, Donkey's beautiful girlfriend, who had blonde hair and was wearing a pink party dress for the occasion.

"Donkey! You've arrived," she told him, greeting him with joy.

"Candy!" Donkey ran to hug her lovingly.

"Oh, Donkey, I was already waiting for you," she added, looking excited. "You have to tell me well how your adventure was."

"Well, there's a lot to tell, my dear Candy," Donkey responded, smiling at her... But suddenly, his smile was fading when he saw Diddy from the distance: he was walking... a little scared and looking at everything around him; nothing compared to how he looked when they had just arrived at the party.

"Is something wrong, darling?" Candy asked him when she saw his changed expression.

"No... Well, it's just... Diddy," Donkey said, showing concern. "I see something strange about him."

"Strange? Maybe it's just the adventure that has left him very exhausted, honey."

"No, I don't think so. It's just that right now he got like that..." he added, but then tried to remain calm. "Oh, well, maybe he's tired. Okay, Candy... let's go to the party," he finished with a smile at her.

Later, the party started and everyone looked happy and excited. The entire Kong family and other apes were present, ready to receive the duo of heroes who had rescued the banana reserve. That night was expected to be the most fun.

But on another context, Diddy was walking alone in a corner... In fact, he looked a little worried, and even as if he were afraid. As Funky had mentioned, his classmates were also there as guests. It was supposed Diddy would be excited about that, but unfortunately... it was the opposite. Diddy's spirit was fading due to the presence of those classmates, rather... due to a group of four Kong children in particular, whom he did not want to see at all.

On the other hand, Lanky, Donkey's distant cousin orangutan, with a red nose and light blue overalls, was preparing everything to serve the food to the guests from table to table. At that time, Diddy arrived by surprise to talk to him.

"Hi, Lanky!" Diddy greeted him.

"Oh, how are you, Diddy?" the orangutan responded, smiling at him.

"Can I help you with something?" Diddy asked him kindly.

"Sure, why not, little boy?" Lanky answered cheerfully. "Here, help me by serving the drinks," he added, handing him a tray with the drinks, which Diddy took without problems, before heading towards the guest area.

Diddy went to the tables where the guests were. He began to distribute the entrance drinks to everyone, while they greeted him with joy as the second hero of the island, and he returned the same gesture. Diddy was always flattered when he was recognized as such.

Suddenly, as Diddy was walking to one of the tables, and without him realizing it... someone threw a ball at him, which he tripped over and fell along with the drinks, spilling some on the guests who were nearby. Everyone turned to look at him immediately, and he was quite embarrassed by such a sudden event that took him by surprise.

"Oh, no! Very sorry!" Diddy apologized to the guests whose drinks he spilled on them, receiving somewhat uncomfortable looks from them.

Suddenly, Diddy heard some mocking laughter and, later, he managed to see out of the corner of his eye who were the ones who had thrown that ball at him... They were none other than those classmates of his, who were laughing among themselves at him while they remained hidden, behind some bushes.

"Oh, no, it's those stupid kids," Diddy said in his mind, very annoyed.

"Oh, no, Diddy, but what did you do?!" Lanky exclaimed, arriving shocked at the event.

"It was an accident, I'm sorry!" Diddy hastened to exclaim.

"Oh, no," Lanky interrupted, looking somewhat scandalized. "If you're going to do something, you have to do it very carefully, Diddy."

"But..."

"No, don't worry, I'll do it," he interrupted, picking up the tray with the fallen glasses.

Diddy just rolled his eyes and sighed reluctantly, because now he would have to watch out in case his four schoolmates came to bother him more. He even passed by the bush where they were hiding while he gave them a withering look, and they returned mocking gestures. It was a group of four children of his same age, who lived on another island near DK Island. The group was made up of a mandrill, an orangutan, a red-shanked douc langur and a capuchin monkey. They were Diddy's "friends"... "friends" in quotes because they didn't really get along with him at all. In fact, they used to be his friends, but due to certain conflicts and differences they stopped being friends. Nowadays, those kids only liked to make Diddy's life miserable at school. And their teacher? Well, she was nothing more and nothing less than Wrinkly Kong, but Diddy never dared to report those ape children, since they threatened him if he accused them... Therefore, they were not Diddy's friends as some believed.

Getting things back on track a little, Funky arrived to tell Diddy that it was his turn to give the welcome speech.

"Hey, brother, I was looking for you," Funky told him. "Let's start with the program."

"And do I have to talk, too?" Diddy asked, confused.

“Of course, you were also in the adventure. Come, let's go!”

Minutes later, Swanky Kong, that gorilla who always wore gold rings and elegant clothes, and who was always the presenter at the events, took the stage to proceed to welcome.

"Good evening, dear guests present tonight," Swanky said into the microphone, capturing the audience's attention. "As you already know, this is a celebration of gratitude to our distinguished Donkey Kong and Diddy Kong, since they fought against that evil King K. Rool in order to recover our sacred banana reserve. And well, below we present our beloved heroes. Applause, please!"

Donkey and Diddy took the stage to give a few words, while the audience applauded and shouted words of admiration at them. Swanky then gave the microphone to both of them, with Donkey being the first to take it.

"Good evening, friends from DK Island," Donkey began to speak into the microphone, smiling at the crowd. "It's an honor that you have attended this celebration tonight. That lizard K. Rool tried to take over our banana supply... But he couldn't! And do you know why? Because for us Kongs, nothing is impossible, so with the help of my little buddy, we went to the rescue and gave that dumb reptile the beating he deserved. Well, here we are without any further worries. Enjoy tonight!"

After that, Diddy took the microphone and addressed the audience to give other words as well.

"Welcome everyone to this celebration," Diddy began to speak. "It's a great honor..."

Suddenly, the microphone went off and the electricity went out, returning in a few seconds.

"Oh, excuse me," Diddy said, laughing a little when the microphone came back on. "And as I was telling you..."

At that time, Diddy's voice began to sound very high-pitched through the microphone, and it was changed as if they were putting special effects on it... and behind the stage, his four "friends" had infiltrated and had begun to manipulate the devices where the microphone was connected. The entire audience began to laugh and murmur, except for Donkey and Swanky who tried to remain serious. Diddy was embarrassed and didn't want to talk anymore, so he just handed the microphone back to Swanky.

"Uh, it looks like we had a technical failure," Swanky excused, taking the microphone again, before offering it to Diddy again. "Do you want to talk again, Diddy?"

Diddy, without saying anything, just shook his head, very embarrassed and, at the same time, suspicious of who this tasteless trap had come from.

"Oh, well," Swanky continued, regaining his posture. "So... next, our heroes will put on a show with their fun stunts!"

After that, Donkey and Diddy began to put on a show with their most outstanding stunts that they knew how to do. Both of them were well in sync as they had rehearsed a lot. Donkey lifted heavy objects, walked on his hands and rolled on barrels, while Diddy swung on vines, performed impressive jumps and juggled coconuts. The audience was amazed by the show.

But as Diddy was juggling, several marbles appeared rolling near him on the stage floor, causing him to trip and accidentally throw the coconuts into one of the high lights.

“Oh, no!” Diddy exclaimed when, due to the impact, the lights began to fall and caused the stage to wobble.

Suddenly, due to the short circuits that were being generated, the stage began to catch fire, and the audience began to become alarmed and run in desperation. Seconds later, the stage was collapsing little by little until it fell completely to the ground. Fortunately, the kongs that were on it had managed to get down in time.

“Keep calm everyone!” Funky shouted to everyone present, while he ran for some water.

Fortunately, Funky, Donkey and other Kongs managed to grab barrels full of water and were able to control the fire, throwing them on the flames.

“Everyone calm down, it's over!” Swanky exclaimed, trying to calm the others.

Diddy was near the stage, all scared... until he could see his classmates laughing at what had happened in the distance, and he noticed that they were carrying several marbles in their hands... which were the same he had seen on the stage!

Diddy, angry and ashamed of what happened, grumbled secretly and ran away from the place shortly after.

“Wait, little buddy!” Donkey exclaimed, but Diddy was already too far away.

“Hey! Diddy, don't go! It was just an accident!” Funky shouted. “Come back here!”

“Gosh, but what happened?” Cranky asked with his hands at his sides. “Why this disaster?”

“It must have been an accident,” Donkey replied seriously. “Diddy had to have made a bad move... But normally he would apologize, why would he run away?”

“Hey, Donkey, don't you think there's something wrong with Diddy?” Lanky speculated with concern.

“It's true, he's not like that,” Swanky added in the same way. “Not even in your own celebration.”

“I don't know, the truth is I've also seen it very strange lately. Maybe he got nervous,” Donkey answered, crossing his arms. “I've seen him like this... ever since he returned to school, in fact.”

“Well, I haven't seen him doing badly at school,” commented Wrinkly, the old Kong, who was his teacher. “He has good grades, is very intelligent and gets along well with his friends... Well, only now does he forget his homework on certain days.”

“Wait!” Funky interrupted, looking serious. “Now that you say that... I just remembered that Diddy made a strange face when I told him... that his school friends were also here.”

“Hey, that's true,” Donkey responded in the same way. “I thought I was the only one who had noticed... It's not for nothing, but... sometimes I have a certain bad feeling,” he stated, frowning.

“Wrinkly, does Diddy get along with his school friends?”

"He's always gotten along with them, they're his group of friends," Wrinkly responded with crossed arms. "In fact, almost every time I arrive, I find them so happy playing."

"Donkey, or why don't you talk to Diddy?" Candy proposed, also showing concern. "Maybe he had a fight with his friends or something, or the adventure must have affected him in some way."

Donkey just sighed as he thought about what to do about what happened.

Donkey immediately ran home to go see Diddy so he could settle the matter. Diddy usually apologized for some accident like the one that had just happened, but this time, he had just walked away.

"Diddy!" Donkey shouted as he arrived at the house.

Donkey climbed the stairs and entered the house. He continued calling him, but Diddy didn't answer.

"Diddy, can we talk?"

At that time, he went to Diddy's room, but the door was locked.

"Oh, come on, Diddy, it was just an accident, it wasn't your fault," but Donkey didn't receive any response, so he decided to enter through Diddy's room window. "Diddy, get out wherever you are!"

Donkey began to inspect the room from all sides. It took him a minute until he finally found his nephew under the bed.

"Aha! Here you are."

Diddy, with his legs drawn up and wrapped with his arms, just looked at Donkey, and then looked down again.

"Oh, come on, buddy. You don't have to be like this."

Diddy continued without saying anything, as if he hadn't heard Donkey. At that moment, Donkey grabbed his arm and forcibly pulled him out of the bed.

"Hey!" Diddy exclaimed before being dragged out by Donkey.

"What happened to you, Diddy?!" Donkey asked, still not receiving a response from Diddy. "Oh, it's okay, little buddy, it was an accident," he added, patting him on the shoulder.

"I-I'm so sorry, I didn't mean to ruin the party," Diddy responded, looking down and rubbing his arm.

"Don't worry, the stage is set and the party's still going to continue, why don't we go back?"

Diddy, without saying anything else, just nodded his head. Then, he followed Donkey to the door of the house.

"Uhhh, no... I'd better stay," Diddy said, stopping, and with a fearful tone.

"What? Come on, it's okay," Donkey encouraged. "Everything will continue as normal."

"No, Donkey! I don't want to be there," Diddy replied with a look as if he were begging for mercy.

"What are you saying, Diddy? If that party was made for us."

"I know, but... No, I don't want to go, that's all!" he exclaimed, turning around.

Donkey made a strange look at Diddy's attitude. He had a feeling that something was not right with his nephew, since he used to get quite excited about the holidays, and it seemed very strange to him that this time he acted that way, much more so if it was the party celebrating them as heroes.

"What are you saying, Diddy?!" Donkey exclaimed in shock. "What do you mean you don't want to be at our celebration?"

"I just don't want to!" Diddy replied, starting to walk towards his room, before Donkey took him by the arm.

"Hey, but it's our celebration!" Donkey replied.

"I don't want to go, that's all!" Diddy exclaimed, letting go in one fell swoop.

"What happens with you?" Donkey asked, looking at him strangely and holding his arm again. "I have noticed you very strange."

"Why do you say that? There's nothing wrong with me, Donkey."

Even so, Diddy didn't want to give much of an explanation as to why he was giving up on returning to the party.

"Sure?" Donkey asked with some doubt.

"Surely," he responded with some concern and moving his arm away.

"That face doesn't convince me," Donkey said with his hands at his sides. "I know something is wrong and you don't want to tell me."

"What are you talking about?"

"Well, I see you very strange, you seem scared and wanting to escape from everything... You didn't even want to hang out with your friends at the party. In fact..." he looked up, "when Funky said that they had been invited too, your face totally changed.

"Oh, yeah, I just didn't know they were invited," Diddy said almost instantly. "And I preferred to go help Lanky, that's all."

"I know you so well, Diddy," Donkey told him, beginning to lose patience. "Why don't you tell me what's happening?"

"What are you talking about?! Leave me alone," Diddy replied as he headed to his room. "And good night, tomorrow I have to go to... school," he finished, rolling his eyes surreptitiously.

“To school, huh?” Donkey said, looking at him suspiciously. “And can I ask, how have you been doing so far at school?... And how about your new friends?”

“But I have already told you about them, they are good friends.”

“You say they are good friends when you didn't even go to greet them?”

“Uh, well, actually... now we have had some little problems...”

Donkey, starting to get impatient and wanting to be more direct, took Diddy's arm more firmly.

“How do you get along with them? By any chance, they don't... treat you badly or something?” Donkey said, fixing his gaze.

“W-What? No!” Diddy responded, looking very nervous. “Of course not! Why would they do it?”

“Tell me the truth!”

“I told you no. Let me go!” Diddy replied, turning away in disgust to go to his room. “And where did you get that idea?”

“Because when you go to school, I notice you are very nervous, and besides, when Funky told you that your friends were also there, you made a scared face, and besides, those kids... give me a very bad feeling, I don't know about you. And by the way, why are you having little problems?”

“It's nothing serious, don't take it care.”

“*Of course I care!* Just tell me why you're like this!”

“Well, the truth is that nothing happens, and that's it! *See you tomorrow!*” Diddy yelled as he entered his room, before slamming the door shut.

“*HEY! I WON'T TOLERATE THAT ATTITUDE, DIDDY!*” Donkey shouted, getting furious at that.

“*SEE YOU TOMORROW, I SAID!*” Diddy shouted from his room.

Donkey gave the door a small kick. Now he also didn't understand why Diddy had answered him that way. But still, he was worried about his nephew. His instinct as his uncle told him that something was not right. Although it was no wonder... Diddy had fallen out with his classmates at school, and even that seemed to make him afraid, but for some reason, he didn't want to tell Donkey the truth.

Donkey, after insisting so much to Diddy and not receiving an affirmative response, left his house and let out a frustrated sigh. He decided to return to the party venue, since after all, he couldn't leave it. Although the celebration continued normally, it no longer had the same essence without Diddy.

That's it for the first chapter.

Why is Diddy behaving like that and not wanting to tell anything? Maybe he will explain it later...

Chapter 2: A Bad Day at School... Like Any Other

"You will pay us, Diddy Kong!"

"NO, LEAVE ME!" Diddy begged, waving his limbs, but these were stopped later.

Diddy was tense and with his pulse racing as a quartet of kong children, each of a different species, had him pinned to the ground, near a huge cliff with wild waves below. No matter how much Diddy tried to get rid of them, he couldn't, because apparently these kong children were exerting quite a bit of force against him.

"LET GO OF ME, PLEASE!" Diddy yelled at them.

"Did you tell Donkey, huh?!" one of them told him in a threatening tone. *"What have we told you about..."*

"I haven't told Donkey or Wrinkly anything, I SWEAR!" Diddy interrupted desperately.

Suddenly, these four kong children lifted him up by his limbs, and at the same time, Diddy felt like he couldn't move at all. The four of them began to move him towards the edge of the cliff and, after a couple of swings, they mercilessly threw him into the void. Diddy was screaming in terror as he fell towards the sea, where enormous and repetitive waves crashed against some rocks.

As he fell, Diddy felt blows all over his body and opened his eyes as wide as he could. Then all he saw was nothing but the floor of his room... He got up immediately and realized that he was inside in... He had just had a nightmare, one of many of that type that he had had several times before with the group of his "friends" from school.

"Diddy!"

Diddy jumped a little after hearing his name called: it was just Donkey, who was knocking on his room door and kept calling him repeatedly. Diddy went to open the door for him and just looked at him seriously.

"Diddy! I thought I heard you scream and then there was a bang, what's wrong?"

"Uhhh... no... Nothing, Donkey," Diddy replied in a dull tone. "I-it was just me that fell out of bed... I think I was having a bad dream about... the Kremlings!... That's all."

It was a school day and, therefore, Diddy had to attend... even if he didn't want to, so he had to go get ready. Before he left for school, he apologized to Donkey for the discussion the night before and for giving up on returning to the party that had been thrown for the two of them. Deep down, Diddy felt terrible that he couldn't tell Donkey the truth; he was always like his best friend ever, but this time he couldn't tell him what was happening.

"Donkey, I... sorry for yelling at you, it's just..."

Donkey, although a little distrustful of his little nephew, decided not to insist for the moment that he tell him what was happening to him.

"It's okay, Diddy," he put a hand on his shoulder. "Just remember that I'm like your older brother, and you can tell me anything that happens to you. You know how important you are to me and I will be with you no matter what. And look... I hope I'm wrong, but if there's something bad that happens to you, you can tell me."

"Well, it's just... last night I just felt bad about the accident I caused at the party, that's all," Diddy responded, trying to show himself truthfully.

"Sure?" Donkey asked him, looking up, but at the same time, trying not to pressure him at that moment. "Well... I really hope it's just that. Anyway, you don't have to worry about it, little buddy, it was just an accident, and it's already fixed. So... don't feel bad about it."

"Okay, Donkey," Diddy responded with a down look, even though he hadn't spoken the truth.

"Now go quickly or you'll be late," Donkey said, patting him on the back.

Donkey accompanied Diddy to the door of the house and just looked at him with a worried face after saying goodbye to him.

Diddy headed towards Kong Kollege, the school on DK Island. But he was scared like almost every day; he didn't want to see his group of evil classmates for fear that they would attack him. That was the second year in which he had to study with them. Last year, he had met them and they had become friends... but not for more than a couple of months.

Kong Kollege was a small school in the middle of the jungle, with only one classroom for a capacity of fifteen to twenty students, run solely by Wrinkly Kong.

When he got there, Diddy saw that group of his classmates in the distance, and immediately hid behind some bushes. He was very scared, he wanted to return home, but he wasn't going to miss classes because of attendance. As on most of his school days, just seeing those kids caused him some fear and discomfort.

These four kong children were a little taller than Diddy. His names were: Jemky, the orangutan, who had bright orange fur, a tuft of hair on top of his head, and wore a green vest; Mandrew, the mandrill, who had a face with faint blue and red colors, his fur was gray and he wore a striped t-shirt with the same colors; Rocky, a capuchin monkey, who had a white head, dark brown underfur, and wore a light brown t-shirt; and Melenky, the red-shanked douc langur with a white mane and arms, gray and black fur, a colorful face and red legs.

Diddy, for the moment, decided to stay hidden in a corner among the bushes until Mrs. Wrinkly arrived; sometimes, he would stay there without going out... When suddenly, and for his bad luck, four kongs appeared in front of him, causing him a great scare... Unfortunately, they were those four kids who long ago called themselves his "friends".

"Just ignore them, Diddy, just ignore them," he said to himself in his mind as he began to walk in another direction and looked out of the corner of his eye with fear at those primate children.

"Oh! Look who was hiding here," said Jemky, the orangutan, showing a mischievous smile.

"But it's the cowardly dwarf monkey," said Mandrew, the mandrill. "About time you arrived, you little oaf."

"Did you like ruining the party and being foolish?" added Rocky, the capuchin monkey, in a mocking tone.

"For a hero who saved that silly banana reserve, you looked *completely ridiculous*," concluded Melenky, the langur, laughing.

Then, the four kids started laughing mockingly. Diddy just rolled his eyes, trying to resist answering them defensively, but it was no use.

"Shut up, that was your fault! You ruined the celebration, idiots!" Diddy shouted at them and, immediately afterward, he walked toward the classroom with firm steps.

Suddenly, Jemky, the orangutan kid, went back to Diddy and grabbed him by the shirt from the front, speaking to him in a warning tone.

"Did you raise your voice at us?... Do you want to fight? Do you want to test our power, you useless dwarf?!" he yelled at him while Diddy begged for mercy with his eyes.

"Uh, no... I was just saying... No, wait! *Let me go!*" Diddy pleaded as Rocky, the capuchin monkey, grabbed him by the tail, turning him upside down.

Diddy was going to kick him, but the other kids rushed to hit him and knock him face down on the ground and then grabbed his limbs and prevented him from moving, then they crossed his arms behind him and pressed them hard, making him scream in pain. Jemky then snatched Diddy's backpack and began to rummage what was inside it.

"Let's see, let's see, what do we have here?" said the orangutan kid as he took out some sheets and took a few in particular. "Oh, but these are the mega math exercises that Wrinkly sent."

"Don't you dare, orange peanut head!" Diddy exclaimed with a menacing look.

"I'm very sorry..." Jemky said, starting to tear the sheets into pieces while laughing evilly, "that you're not going to hand it anymore, you dumb monkey."

"Nooo! My homework!" Diddy screamed desperately as they kept him pinned to the ground.

"Idiots! It took me seven hours to solve that!" Diddy got so angry that he wanted to massacre all four of them.

"Oh, what's up, you dumb monkey? Don't you want Wrinkly to give you a bad grade?" Mandrew added, holding him down, before laughing mockingly again along with the group.

"Wait, wait, it's Wrinkly!" Rocky interrupted suddenly. "There she comes!"

Suddenly, Wrinkly, their teacher, was heard nearby. The four bully kids immediately let go and picked up Diddy, hid the pieces of paper and pretended nothing was happening. The arrival of Wrinkly was a great relief for Diddy, because that was when his four annoying classmates stopped bothering him. Wrinkly was very loving and attentive to her students, but she could also punish them when necessary.

"Good morning, my children!" Wrinkly greeted them happily.

"Hello, Mrs. Wrinkly!" the kong children told her, forcing smiles, although it was more noticeable in Diddy.

"What were you doing?" Wrinkly asked them, looking at the scene. Although to tell the truth, she couldn't realize what Diddy suffered with that quartet of kids.

"Oh, we were just playing with our little friend Diddy," Jemky said with a forced smile. "Right, Diddy?" he added, giving Diddy a sneaky warning look.

"Uh, yeah, sure, my friends and I were playing," Diddy responded with a fake smile, trying to hide the situation.

"That's good, I like it that way. Everyone here must be good friends," Wrinkly said, smiling at them. "Now let's go to class, kids."

Wrinkly began walking towards the classroom, while Diddy tried to follow her steps without letting her lose sight of him, while the quartet of bully children also followed him and gave him threatening looks.

Every student entered the classroom and went to their respective desks. There were about nine more students in the classroom; they were other kong boys and girls of different species, but they hardly spoke to them and they didn't even care about Diddy's life or that of the four bully children, since they used to see Diddy as a weirdo and the other four as unfriendly crazy kids. It wasn't really the fun and happy classroom that was expected.

"Well, my children, did you bring the homework I sent you?" Wrinkly asked at the front of the classroom.

"Yes, Mrs. Wrinkly!" every kid responded, except Diddy, who could well have brought it if it weren't for the wickedness of his classmates.

The students got up to deliver their homework to Wrinkly's desk one by one.

"Diddy! Where is your homework?" Wrinkly asked him when she saw that he had not gotten up.

"Uh, well..." Diddy looked askance at his four bully classmates, but at the same time, they secretly gave him looks of threat and mockery. "When I was coming here, I took my homework out of my backpack, but the wind blew it away and got it lost."

"And do you wait for the homework to fly back on its own?" Wrinkly told him with a strange look.

"Seriously, it was an accident!" Diddy reaffirmed, very indignant at the evil that had been done to him. Meanwhile, the four bully children just laughed silently at him from their positions.

"Oh, well, I believe you. I won't lower your grade, little kid," Wrinkly replied calmly. Diddy felt instant relief before hearing Wrinkly's new response. "But right now, I'll have to make you do thirty mathematical exercises and write 'I must bring my homework' a hundred times!"

"But..."

"That's what I can do!" Wrinkly interrupted before he could continue. "Diddy, I don't want to be strict with you, but... this is the fifth time in this school cycle that the same thing has happened and you always come up with the same excuse."

"No, no, but it's true," Diddy replied, trying to sound true. "My homeworks always fly away."

"But I think you should be more careful next time, Diddy," Wrinkly told him seriously. "And well... then you will have to fulfill it in some way: the thirty exercises and to write better 'I must take care of my homework', how about there?"

Diddy only hid a frustration he had to vent. He gave his classmates a murderous look as they continued victoriously mocking him in a low voice and, with great irritation, he had to serve the sanction that Wrinkly imposed on him for not having been able to present the day's homework; he didn't even know what other excuse to say.

Dismissal time arrived, and Wrinkly bid his students a polite farewell. Suddenly, Diddy came up to her to give her some sheets... although with some indignation.

"Oh, it didn't take you that long to finish, Diddy," Wrinkly told him, smiling as she quickly took and reviewed the sheets. "Okay, I'll review them later so I can save your grade today."

"And... does that count the same as homework or not?" Diddy asked her in a low mood.

"Well... not completely, but at least it will help you somewhat," she added, giving him a little pat on the shoulder. Suddenly, she seemed to notice an unusual mood in him. "Is something wrong with you, Diddy?"

"Uh, no, why?" he said, trying to recover his smile.

"I see you a little sad, is everything okay?" she asked him again with concern. "Is it because of last night? Nothing bad happened afterwards, don't worry."

"Uh, no, that's not it... Or well, yes..." Diddy replied, scratching his head. "Yes... and the adventure with Donkey too. I feel a little exhausted, that's all."

"Oh, well, I think you should just get some rest, dear," Wrinkly told him, giving him a calm smile. "Maybe I can consider a week without extra homework for you; I understand that you must be very tired now, my little kid. Just that... I don't want you to neglect your grades, you have always been a brilliant student."

"Yes... yes, of course, I'll be more attentive," Diddy replied, smiling with some insecurity. "And thanks, Wrinkly... I'm going to try to be better."

"Okay, little kid," Wrinkly finished, smiling at him. "Then we'll see you again tomorrow. Have a nice afternoon."

Diddy said goodbye to Wrinkly, before leaving for home. To tell the truth, he wished that he was really just in a bad mood because of the adventure or the accident the day before... but that wasn't the case, and the real reason only made him angry.

The little monkey continued on his way, but when Wrinkly had already left without a trace, the four bully children seemed to take advantage of the moment to continue bothering him. The dismissal times were worse for Diddy, since there would no longer be any more Mrs. Wrinkly watching over them during the day, and all he had to do was run away from there as fast as he could.

"Oh, look! The fool monkey had a lot of work to do today," Melenky mocked as they walked behind Diddy.

"And all because he didn't submit his stupid homework," Jemky added, and then they started laughing.

"He looked stupid in class!" Mandrew added, pointing at him mockingly. "Wrinkly always gives him extra homework in class!"

Diddy tried to ignore them, but he couldn't contain his anger or the desire to answer them.

"Stop bothering me, you stinky apes!" Diddy yelled at them angrily. *"You just have me fed up! Leave me alone now!"*

"Well, we don't want to!" Jemky replied in a mocking manner. "You are a coward, useless and stupid good-for-nothing monkey," he added before quickly grabbing him by the shirt and speaking to him in a threatening tone. "And we give the good-for-nothings a *good beating*."

"This can be resolved in one way!" Rocky exclaimed, bumping his fists.

Suddenly, they took Diddy between the four of them to start hitting him, but he immediately managed to get rid of them, giving them quick and defensive kicks and slaps and then being able to escape.

"Idiots!" he yelled at them after starting to run.

The four of them began to chase him through the jungle while Diddy fled at full speed until they finally lost sight of him. He hid behind some bushes, while he saw those bad children passing by.

"Ugh! That stupid dwarf is already lost!" exclaimed Jemky, grumbling.

"I needed to give him one more beating, I swear!" Mandrew added in the same way as he searched for him with the group. "Gecko-headed monkey!"

"That stupid monkey is like a fool," Melenky added with a mocking gesture. "His face makes me laugh when he sees us, he looks like a scared lizard."

"Anyway, I think that stupid monkey is gone now," Rocky said, shrugging his shoulders. "Now let's go home for lunch, and then that, go get some millipedes."

"Tomorrow, I want to give that dumb monkey a better beating," Mandrew said, bumping fists as they left the area.

"Let him wait, he won't be spared from beatings here," Jemky added.

Diddy just looked at them with deep indignation as he listened to them. He wanted to go out and confront them at that moment, but he was never good at confronting those children, and he even feared doing so.

Diddy, swallowing all his anger, began to head home; finally, he was able to walk calmly at least. His days at school were usually like this: that quartet of kids was always waiting to bother him, whether by tearing up his schoolwork, stealing his belongings, or sending him home with bumps and bruises, to which Diddy only told Donkey that these were the product of some fall.

When Diddy got home, he tried to hide his exhaustion and low spirits so that Donkey wouldn't suspect anything.

"Hi, Diddy. How was your day?" Donkey asked when Diddy entered the house.

"Uhhh... very good, everything... normal," Diddy responded, smiling insecurely.

Donkey seemed to suspect deep down that something was wrong, but he preferred not to talk about it for the moment; he didn't want to make Diddy uncomfortable either.

"Okay..." Donkey said with a forced smile, after a few seconds. "Come, let's eat. Today I prepared a special food."

Diddy continued on his way to his room to leave his things and get comfortable. Later, he accompanied Donkey at lunchtime, where he even remained somewhat quiet most of the time. Donkey, for his part, continued to notice his nephew's mood, although he didn't want to show it much.

After both kongs finished eating lunch, Diddy sat down to watch television, while Donkey had gone to get ready, since he had a date with his girlfriend, Candy, who they usually hung out with very often.

"Buddy, I'm going on a date with Candy," he said while getting his tie ready in the living room.

"Again?"

"Well, yes, I love Candy and I love being with her," Donkey responded in a loving tone.

"But you hang out with her almost every day," Diddy said with a light laugh and looking at him strangely. "So much so?"

"When you'll have a girlfriend, you will understand better, little buddy," he responded, giving him small pats on the head.

"Bah! I would never be like that," Diddy said with a shrug.

"Well, I believe you," Donkey said wryly, before speaking in a mischievous tone. "I'll see you one day with a kong girl."

"Oh, Donkey, please!" he exclaimed, putting his hands on his sides.

"Just kidding, little buddy," Donkey replied, laughing a little as he headed towards the door. "Now I'll leave, behave well and be careful if you go outside."

"I'm not a baby, Donkey," Diddy replied with a mocking smile.

"You will always be to me," Donkey told him in a mocking tone. "Take care, and don't get into mischief, little buddy."

"See you later, big buddy."

Donkey left the house, and went to his date with Candy. For his part, Diddy stayed home alone and watched the television for a while. Later, he got up to look out the window at Donkey until he was out of sight.

"Time to go out!" Diddy said to himself.

Although Donkey told his nephew to be careful if he went outside, Diddy always went for a walk in the jungle to have some fun and take his mind off his bad school days, and that was the case on this one chance. Diddy went for a walk in the middle of the jungle, swinging on vines, climbing the tallest trees, bathing in lakes and jumping from small waterfalls; He usually liked to have fun like that, imagining that he was on one of the adventures that excited him so much.

Suddenly, while Diddy was jumping from tree to tree, he looked up and saw that something was shooting at speed from very high up. For a moment he was scared and thought that suddenly there would be some attack on the island, but after a few seconds, he realized that what was coming had no way of being an object of attack.

Diddy, from the branch of a tree, stopped to get a better look at what it was about, when suddenly he realized that it was a kong, and he was getting closer and closer to the island... Suddenly, that kong took out a big palm leaf suddenly with which he was able to land like a parachute, safely so as not to hurt himself. The kong was a gorilla bigger than Donkey, he wore a red cap, a white t-shirt and a blue vest. But after falling, he ran away as if he wanted to hide from something or someone. The curious fact about that... is that the gorilla was also carrying a small gorilla who was wearing light blue baby clothes. Diddy looked at them strangely and wondered who they were.

Suddenly, Diddy saw someone else coming from above. When that someone fell, it was a small chimpanzee girl, she was wearing a light blue overall, a colorful hat and had two blonde pigtails in her hair. The most surprising thing was that she landed by spinning her pigtails. The little girl also ran to hide along with the two gorillas.

Diddy was very confused; he had never seen those kongs on the island and he was curious to know who they were, where they came from and why that way, so he decided to follow them. He rushed towards the ground with a vine, but didn't notice that another kong was falling from a very high place. Diddy looked up and, just as he landed, someone crashed into him and sent him rolling under a tree. Diddy, standing upside down under the tree, looked up and saw that it was another chimpanzee girl the same size as him. She was wearing a tank top, a beret, and a pair of pink knee pads, and she had blonde hair in a long ponytail. She, upon realizing Diddy's presence, made a gesture of astonishment.

"Uh, hello?" Diddy said, still upside down and smiling through his teeth in confusion. She only stayed silent for a few seconds and waved back from afar with a slight smile, but then she ran away too. "Wait!"

Diddy immediately got up and ran trying to catch up with those four unknown kongs. They all went out of sight for a while, and he tried to look for them until he finally located them. He climbed a tree to observe them better: they were seen with an expression of fear, and they remained very united as if they were trying to escape from something... It was as if they were afraid, as if something was chasing them, but nothing could be seen around them that looked threatening. Diddy, with all the curiosity to know who they were, decided to get down from the tree and go greet them.

"Hello!" Diddy said to the four kongs, causing them a little scare. The four turned to look at him. "You guys, who are you?"

"Look, it's a kong like us!" exclaimed the big gorilla, looking amazed. "Hello! I'm Chunky, what's your name?"

"Now is not the time for this!" the chimpanzee girl in pink clothes interrupted.

"But he wants to be our friend," Chunky replied... before looking up and changing to a fearful expression. "Wait... Is that them?" he pointed up when suddenly he saw something coming towards the island.

Suddenly, a fall was heard, followed by some murmurs from what seemed to be other apes.

"Oh, no! *Run, come this way!*" the chimpanzee girl exclaimed to everyone in despair. "Hide yourself too, monkey in red! *Hide, hide!*"

The four kongs ran away, as if they were trying to hide well from someone that was chasing them, apparently approaching. Diddy had been more confused, but then joined them, as they had given him an arm tug to make him follow along as well. Later, they all stopped in a corner while the four new kongs were agitated.

"Hey, can I ask what this is all about?" Diddy asked them, speaking in a low voice. "Who are you?"

"Look, I'm Dixie, she's Tiny, he's Kiddy and the big gorilla is Chunky," the chimpanzee girl answered, pointing to them one by one. "There is no time for explanations and you better go hiding too..."

"Uhu! So here you are!"

Suddenly... a tall mandrill appeared along with two other mandrills... Diddy managed to hide behind some bushes in time, but the other four kongs ran away, this time with more speed... while those three mandrills began to go after them. Apparently, it was a chase, and those four kongs were the ones they were looking for.

Those four young kongs continued running quickly through the vegetation, as if they had no direction. When suddenly, that trio of baboons appeared again by surprise in front of them, and the young kongs only remained paralyzed with fear when those tall apes found them. The curious thing about the matter is that these apes were carrying rifles in hand; they looked all rough and mean, and wore a small cloak, each one of a different dark color. Apparently, it was a band of evil apes.

"Oh, no! They already caught us," Chunky said in a low voice, terrified, clinging to the other three kongs.

"You little brats thought you could escape from us?!" exclaimed one of the mandrills, shouting at them.

The four kongs embraced each other in anguish and trembling as they clung to each other, as if they feared for their lives.

"Well..." said the mandrill before pointing the rifles at the four of them, which looked like they had high potential.

In addition, they all took out small pocket devices that, when pressing a button, transformed into cannons. These apes, of dubious origin, seemed to intend to shoot the four kongs, who only limited themselves to clinging to each other.

"You *did know* that fugitives like you suffer the consequences," said the mandrills, keeping their weapons pointed at the four. "You better say your last words, you little brats and big guy," he added, pressing the trigger about to shoot.

"*AHHHHH!*" a mandrill exclaimed when he received a stone hit in his eye, at the same time as his shot deflected and he dropped the weapon.

"*BUT WHAT...?!*" exclaimed another mandrill before also receiving a stone in the eye.

Suddenly, several stones began to fall into the eyes of the three mandrills; they were so repetitive that it blinded their vision and seemed to cause them pain that they even had to drop their weapons to help their eyes.

Suddenly, a long branch from one of the trees fell near the mandrills along with a pile of leaves and some vines that, apparently, contained thorns; these fell right on them, leaving them imprisoned for a moment... Then, Diddy appeared on the scene, who with accelerated steps went to dig through the pile of leaves.

"*Hey!* And who is this other brat?!" said another of the mandrills when he realized that a small monkey was interfering in his attack.

Diddy, with a few quick movements and while the mandrills were continually hurting themselves with the thorns, began to take out a couple of their rifles and threw them out of the pile of leaves, heading towards the four new kongs.

"Hold them!" Diddy told them as he threw the weapons to the four of them and they picked them up, although with a little fear and with their hands trembling. "Now run away..."

"*What a naughty little monkey,*" exclaimed one of the mandrills. "*YOU WANT TO FIGHT, DON'T YOU?!*"

Diddy turned to look and saw that one of the mandrills had gotten up with a gun in hand to shoot him... but Diddy, thanks to his agility, managed to avoid it with a lateral jump. He took one of the stones that was on the ground and threw it directly at the mandrill's eye, causing him enormous pain, making him scream and put his hands to himself, so Diddy rushed to take the gun.

Suddenly, the four new kongs pounced on the mandrill and knocked it to the ground. Then, the biggest gorilla named Chunky, dragged the mandrill and carried it back to the pile of leaves to wrap the vines around it, while the three mandrills insulted them all.

Finally, Diddy had an idea... He noticed the cannons that those mandrills had originally brought.

"Can you help me put them in those cannons?" Diddy said to the four fugitives.

They, although with a little fear, ran and helped Diddy ride the evil apes into the cannons; they were all wrapped in those vines with thorns, so they had to be careful not to get hurt too. Finally, they mounted the weapons of these apes inside the cannons.

"Stupid... fugitives..." said one of the mandrills, straining his voice while they were already inside the cannons. "We will catch you... And you, little brat monkey... you'll see..."

Diddy took a couple of stones to light a fire and activate the cannons and, finally, they shot the mandrills at high speed and height. All the kongs watched as they walked away until they were completely out of sight. Then, the four new kongs, after all being scared and gasping in panic, looked at Diddy in amazement.

Diddy, breathing heavily, watched those mandrills look far away. Then, he reacted and realized what had just happened: he had risked his life facing three great apes and he didn't even know where he got all that courage from to do it, since he almost never felt so brave and strong enough to do something like that. After a few seconds, he turned to look at the four kongs who were about to be attacked: they were trembling and trying to regain their calm.

"Are you fine?" Diddy asked them a little shyly when he saw the four of them staring at him seriously. "D-don't worry... I won't hurt you."

A few seconds passed until the four of them were slowly regaining their senses, and they began to smile when they realized that Diddy had saved them.

"Wow! That was *amazing*!" said Tiny, the smallest chimpanzee girl as she ran with Kiddy, the little gorilla, to hug Diddy. "You saved us from those stinky apes!"

"You are incredible, you finished off those evil apes! Chunky wants to hug you too" Chunky, the big gorilla who spoke in the third person, also hugged Diddy, although suffocating him a little.

"Hey! Calm down, you're suffocating him," said Dixie, the other chimpanzee girl.

"Oh, we're sorry, little monkey," Chunky said, apologizing to Diddy, and the three let him go.

"Hey... thanks for saving us," Dixie told Diddy, also looking amazed. "If it weren't for you, those evil apes would have torn us to pieces. Seriously, that was *impressive*."

These four kongs had their faces completely changed. Even Diddy had been impressed with himself; he had just saved four kongs that were in danger of being attacked by a gang of apes who were apparently criminals.

"It was nothing," Diddy replied, smiling and scratching his head. "I was passing by here until I saw you arrive and I wanted to know who you were, until I saw those apes with those rifles and I thought..."

"*You are our hero!*" the four kongs exclaimed, happy and taking him by the arms. Apparently, they couldn't contain their great relief at seeing how Diddy had just saved their lives. "You're great, little unknown monkey!"

"Okay, I just wanted to help you," Diddy added, calming and smiling at them. "By the way, who are you? Let's see if I remember... The big gorilla is named Chunky and the little one is named Kiddy, right?"

"Exact!" Chunky replied. "Chunky is Kiddy's older brother, he doesn't talk much. He's almost a baby, by the way."

"Oh, hello, little Kiddy," Diddy said, shaking the little gorilla's hand, and he shook his hand back, smiling at him. "And she is Tiny, right?" he pointed to the smallest chimpanzee girl.

"That's right," Tiny replied, nodding.

"And she is Trixie?" he added, pointing to the other girl.

"No, it's Dixie," Dixie corrected. "Tiny is my little sister. Kiddy and Chunky are our cousins."

"Oh, I see, you're a family," Diddy concluded.

"And what's your name, little monkey?" Chunky asked him.

"I'm Diddy," he responded, shaking hands with each one.

"Nice to meet you, Diddy!" they all responded.

"And where do you come from?" Diddy asked them. "And who were those apes that followed you?"

Suddenly, the four kongs changed their expressions again. They looked at each other and they made a sad face when Diddy asked them that, which he could notice and felt a little guilty for doing it.

"Oh, I'm sorry," Diddy told them, a little embarrassed. "Is something..."

"No, don't worry... It's just a long story," Dixie responded in a low tone.

"Those apes were cruel exterminators," Tiny said sadly. "They had us locked up."

"We've been running and hiding from them for a long time," Chunky continued in the same way. "Recently they found us again, they took us on a boat and we launched ourselves with one of their cannons to escape."

"And then they found us here," Dixie added. "But... I see that thanks to you, they went far away... and I hope they don't come back."

"*Bad apes*," Kiddy exclaimed in his childish voice, looking scared.

"I see... But why did they keep you locked up?" Diddy asked them with some concern.

"They are leaders of an evil organization," Dixie added with some fear. "They had us enslaved, and our family..."

Diddy could notice all the deep sadness in the four new kongs after asking them about those evil apes he had just faced. He didn't want to be reckless anymore and apologized again.

"Okay, don't worry... If you want, don't tell it now," Diddy responded, noticing all the four's low expressions and thinking that suddenly it was a delicate topic.

"Hey, if you're here, then there are more kongs on this island?" Tiny asked him curiously.

"Of course," Diddy replied, smiling at them again. "You see, this island is named *DK Island*. We live here quite a few kongs, but also more animals."

"Oh, really? Look, it looks like we landed in a good place," said Chunky, smiling a little again. "Chunky wants to meet you all!"

"Yeah!" Kiddy added, jumping slightly.

"Yeah! Can we, Dixie?" Tiny said, taking her sister by the arm.

"I don't know..." Dixie responded, instead looking worried. "First we must find a place to stay, and when things calm down a little, we will try to return to our island... I hope we find it."

"A place to stay? You could stay here if you want," Diddy suggested gently. "I'll call the other kongs so I can help you and..."

"Wait!" Dixie interrupted with some fear. "Is this island... *safe*?"

"Of course. Well, there's just one lizard king named K. Rool who bothers us sometimes and..."

"Uhh, I think... we better go somewhere else..."

"But don't worry about it," Diddy interrupted, trying not to alarm them. "A short time ago we had a battle against him. He's not going to bother us for a long time."

"Oh, come on, Dixie! It seems like a nice place here," Chunky added encouragingly. "Besides, we sent those mandrills to fly away."

"Yes, there are no dangers around here at the moment," Diddy added. "I'll call my friends so..."

"Uhh, and don't you know of any empty houses, shelters or something like that?" Dixie interrupted, still showing insecurity.

"No problem, we could build you a house maybe," Diddy suggested. "We could even back you up in case those apes come back."

"No, don't worry," Dixie replied, apparently still not sure about staying. "We just want somewhere to shelter for the moment."

"Oh, well, well, okay," Diddy replied. He was going to continue giving them more suggestions, but he didn't want to pressure them either. "Look, I think there's a house over there. Come this way," he pointed in a direction towards the jungle.

The five set off. Diddy led the new kongs to an old abandoned house he knew. They needed a place to stay, and Diddy has always liked to help someone who needs it. The other four kongs followed him through the jungle and, as they walked, they talked about themselves.

"But Dixie, I wanted to meet the other kongs," Tiny said, somewhat frustrated towards her sister.

"Not now, Tiny... First, we have to see what this place is like," Dixie answered quietly. "And we shouldn't talk to strangers so soon."

"Well, I think Dixie is right," Chunky added, looking nervous. "Remember those gorillas we met on the other island that turned out to be cannibals and almost ate us alive."

"Hey, no one is a cannibal here," Diddy responded, trying to reassure them. "At least the kongs in our herd we know are not evil."

"And do you live with someone, Diddy?" Tiny asked him.

"I live with my uncle, Donkey Kong. He's the future ruler here."

"Future ruler?" Dixie asked. "And is there a current one?"

"Of course, his name is Cranky, he's my great-grandfather... Although he's a bit grumpy, yes," Diddy commented with a light laugh.

"And your parents?" Chunky asked him. "Uhh, don't you live with them?"

"Well... I don't have parents," Diddy replied, changing to a low tone. "I would say it's a delicate topic, really."

"Oh, we're the same... We don't have them either," Tiny said, looking sad.

"Really?... And... something happened?" Diddy asked them unsurely.

"Long... story," Dixie responded, also looking sad. "It's also a very delicate topic."

"Bad apes!" Kiddy added, hinting a little at the answer.

Hearing "bad apes" from Kiddy, Diddy could assume that something terrible had happened to them and it surely had to do with that gang of apes. He didn't want to be reckless, so he refrained from asking them any more questions about it.

"Look, we've arrived!" Diddy exclaimed later.

They had arrived at the house that Diddy had told them about, but to tell the truth...was in bad conditions. It was a treehouse that was a little old, dirty and had some flaws in the structure, and the worst thing was that the tree that supported it was very thin and looked very fragile, about to fall.

"Hey, sorry to say it, but... are you sure we can live... *there*?" Dixie asked, pointing at the house with a forced smile.

"Well... of course," Diddy responded in the same way when he realized that the house was really in terrible condition. "Come on, let's all go up."

The five kongs went up to the house one by one and inspected every corner of it. It was definitely in a very deteriorated state, but still, Diddy wanted to convince himself that it was still suitable.

"Uh, well... You can stay the night here if you want, and..."

A few minutes later, the house began to sway due to the weight of everyone. Until, suddenly, it began to fall towards the ground. The kongs screamed in despair as they fell, but fortunately, only the tree fell; the house was still standing.

"Uhh, don't worry, the house is still intact, right?" Diddy apologized, smiling at them, while the four new kongs looked at him quite strangely.

The four kongs looked around the house again. Truth be told, it looked more confident on the ground than it did when it was up in the tree.

"Still, this house doesn't look bad enough to stay," Dixie said with a shrug and a little smile again.

The kongs agreed to stay there, since after all, the old house had not completely collapsed.

"Diddy, tell us more about this island," Chunky told him after a moment. "What are the other kongs that live here like?"

"Well, what can I tell you," Diddy responded thoughtfully. "There are many stories from this island. And the other kongs, each one has their own way of being."

"Is your family or herd very big or small?" Tiny asked him curiously.

Diddy wanted to cheer up the new kongs, so he stayed with them for a while, and then even got them some bananas so they could eat. Without realizing it, they started to talk a little until they had a little more trust. Diddy told them more about the island and also about the other Kongs that lived there, and even about his adventure against King K. Rool...

"... Donkey is my uncle, although he is more like an older brother to me, Candy is his girlfriend, Wrinkly and Cranky are my great-grandparents, Funky is our friend who always has new inventions, Lanky is a distant cousin of Donkey, Swanky is also our friend..."

... We have a big reserve of bananas to feed ourselves, although there are times when it must be watched and protected from theft...

... Once they left me guarding the reserve, but those kremlings arrived...

... Our banana reserve had been stolen, so Donkey and I went to save it..." Diddy said while the other four were paying attention to what he was saying.

The four new kongs also told Diddy some things about themselves, but they didn't go into much detail because apparently, they didn't feel as comfortable speaking in context to what almost happened to them recently with those mandrills.

Later, Diddy saw that it was getting late, and Donkey would be home any minute, so he already had to say goodbye to the new kongs he had met.

"Are you leaving now?" Tiny asked him.

"Will you come again?" Chunky added.

Apparently, the four of them had enjoyed meeting Diddy and hearing his stories as well as his adventures.

"Of course, why not?" Diddy answered them. "I could come again tomorrow so you can know the island, what do you think?"

"Oh, okay, Diddy," Dixie said. "It was nice to meet you."

"And this island looks interesting," Tiny added, smiling. "We will wait for you."

"Okay," Diddy said as he left the house. "It was a pleasure to meet you too."

"Uh... Diddy," Dixie told him before he left. "We would just like to ask you one thing: please don't tell anyone about the four of us yet... We want to keep a low profile until we can stabilize, okay?"

"Oh, it's okay, don't worry," Diddy replied, smiling at them. "Then we'll see you tomorrow. See you later."

"See you later, Diddy," said Chunky, and Diddy left.

“And thanks again for saving us from those stupid apes!” Tiny shouted into the distance.

Diddy quickly went home before Donkey arrived, as he had left without telling him anything. On the way, he began to think about the new kongs that had arrived on the island; if it hadn't been for him, those evil mandrills would have already finished them off. Diddy had saved them... He had saved four lives! and he felt very good about it. Diddy really had a good impression of the new kongs and he was looking forward to getting to know them more.

Donkey was already close to his house, and Diddy was just as well. He had rushed in through the window and, upon entering, took some books to pretend that he had been there for a while. Then, Donkey entered the house and greeted his nephew.

“Hi, Diddy!”

"Oh, hi, Donkey," Diddy replied as he lay on the couch. "How did it go?"

Diddy wanted to tell him what happened that afternoon and about the four new kongs he met, but he couldn't since, at their request, he didn't have to reveal their information. Although Diddy didn't fully know what their story was like, he was quite curious to know more about them, but he figured that he shouldn't be so reckless to ask them directly what had happened to them before they came to DK Island.

A/N: That's it for chapter 2 :)

By the way, I have the concept arts of my OCs, those bully kids from Kong Kollege:

JEMKY



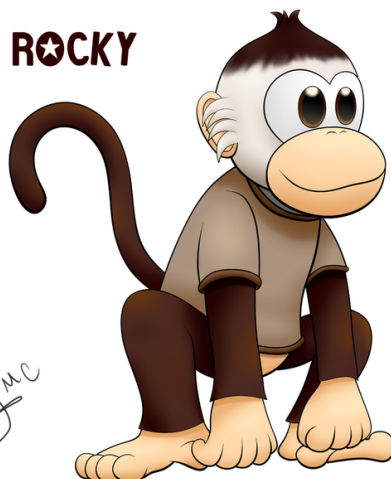
MANDREW



MELENKY



ROCKY



Handwritten signature

Chapter 3: New Friends

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The next day was another school day, so Diddy left on his way to Kong Kollege. But first, he decided to go visit the new kongs that had arrived the day before to see how they were doing and, in addition, he brought them a few bananas from the reserve.

Diddy arrived at the house where they had stayed and looked out the window. The four new kongs were already starting to wake up.

"Hey, hello! It's me," Diddy called them softly.

The four kongs turned to see him and greeted him with joy.

"Hey? It's Diddy. Hi!"

"Diddy, you're back!"

"Hey, Diddy!"

"Here, I brought you some bananas," Diddy said, handing them the bananas he had brought them.

"Oh, thanks, Diddy!" the young kongs said happily while taking the bananas.

"Will you stay with us for a while?" Chunky asked him.

"Not now, I have to go to school," Diddy replied. "But maybe in the afternoon I will come and take you to see the island a little, what do you think?" he suggested to them kindly.

"That would be great," Chunky replied, smiling.

"Yes, I want to go!" Tiny jumped with excitement.

"Well, but... isn't it dangerous?" Dixie asked, looking a little worried.

"Of course not, Trixie. There are nice and fun places here," Diddy replied.

"It's Dixie," she clarified with a little laugh. "And well, then no problem. Come on later."

"Okay, then we'll go this afternoon," Diddy said goodbye. "See you later!"

Then, Diddy headed towards school. At first, he remained smiling after having gone to greet the group of kongs that he had just met; he hadn't even realized that he was calm this time... until he remembered that he was approaching Kong Kollege, and was now thinking about the group of his bully classmates.

Diddy was arriving and, like the day before, and like almost every day, the quartet of bully children were waiting to do something bad to him. Diddy tried to stay hidden in certain corners near Kong Kollege, trying not to be found by any of those kids, whom he had already seen nearby.

Diddy ducked into the bushes to try to get to the classroom stealthily. When suddenly, Jemky, the orangutan boy, appeared to him by surprise without him being able to see him before. He stood in front of Diddy and grabbed him by the shirt instantly.

"There you are, you rotten lizard!"

"Ugh, you are going to start!" Diddy responded, trying to get free.

"We've got you, you dumb dwarf!" Mandrew exclaimed, appearing along with Melenky and Rocky.

"No! Let me..."

Before Diddy could make a defensive move, the four bully kids grabbed him tightly and began to drag him to a hidden corner among the trees. Jemky knocked him down and slammed him to the ground, then Mandrew rushed in with a kick that left him hurting for a while and kept his arms crushed along with Melenky. Meanwhile, Rocky had taken Diddy's backpack to start rummaging through it, and from it he took out his lunch.

"Hey, Melenky, take this!" Rocky said, throwing the lunch, which Melenky took by surprise.

"Uh, are we going to eat it?" Melenky asked, confused as he held the lunch.

"Don't be dumb, throw it away!" Jemky replied.

"Don't even think about it, clown face!" Diddy warned Melenky as Mandrew kept him pinned down.

"Well, it's too bad that you're going to die of hunger this break, dwarf," Melenky told him in a mocking tone.

Melenky hurriedly threw the lunch on the floor and began to trample it until it was destroyed, while laughing with the group.

"Nooo!" Diddy exclaimed, pushing Mandrew away and trying to save his lunch, but it was too late.

Suddenly, Rocky and Melenky grabbed his arms again, and then Jemky and Mandrew took the pieces of Diddy's lunch to start rubbing them in his face, until he was all soaked and caked with food.

"Noo! Leave...!" Diddy exclaimed, trying to open his eyes because his vision was obstructed.

The quartet began to laugh mockingly as they saw Diddy with his face covered in food scraps.

"Buuuh! You're going to be without eating anything, lizard-headed monkey!" Mandrew said, pointing at him and laughing.

"And with your stupid face stamped!" Melenky added in the same way.

"Ugh! How I hate you, dumb idiots!" Diddy grumbled at them, before going against them. *"You are..."*

"Hey, hey, be careful!" Jemky said, holding him by the arms and looking at him menacingly. *"Don't stand up to us, you stupid monkey, or you'll have to face the consequenc-"*

"There comes Wrinkly, guys!" Rocky interrupted, looking in one direction. "Act normal!"

Immediately, the quartet rushed to grab some plant leaves and began cleaning up the remains of food on the floor, and even roughly wiped Diddy's face a little.

"Good morning, student..." Wrinkly appeared on the scene, and then observed the stage. "But what has happened here?"

"Uh... Hello, Mrs. Wrinkly!" Jemky answered with a forced smile. "Our little friend Diddy dropped his lunch and we were helping him pick it up and... he also fell right in front of his lunch and it got all over his face."

"Yeah, we're cleaning up the mess," Rocky added in the same way.

"Oh, you're so kind," Wrinkly said, smiling at them. "Well, Diddy, you can go wash your face now, and don't worry about your lunch, you have some very good friends who will surely want to share their lunch with you. Hey, I want to see the four of you sharing your lunches with Diddy right now, okay?" she ordered them.

The four of them made a strange gesture and looked with hidden malice at Diddy when Wrinkly gave them that idea, but they tried to smile anyway.

"Yes... of course, Mrs. Wrinkly," Jemky replied, looking askance at Diddy. "We will give some of our lunch to our little friend."

"Okay, let's go to the classroom now," Wrinkly told them before continuing walking. "Class is going to start."

Following this, everyone entered the classroom. Diddy, with a half-stamped face, stared at his evil classmates, making mocking signs at Wrinkly's suggestion, while they returned the same gestures behind their teacher's back.

"Rotten banana-head monkey," Jemky whispered, rolling his eyes at him.

"*Cretinous* scoundrels," Diddy responded in the same way.

"See you later, Diddy," Donkey said goodbye from the door of the house. "Are you sure you don't want to come? Funky is taking us surfing today."

"No, I can't now, Donkey. I have to do a very difficult homework," Diddy answered as he looked at his notebooks.

"Okay, buddy. Then see you."

Donkey left and headed to Funky's house because they were meeting Lanky and Swanky at the beach. Diddy had also been invited, but he preferred to stay because he could take advantage of the moment to go out with the new kongs that he had recently met, since he had promised them that he would take them to know the island that same afternoon.

Diddy headed towards the new kongs' house. He had sympathized with them quite well, that he wanted to get to know them more and be able to cheer them up after the events of the previous day.

"Hey, look! It's Diddy!" Tiny exclaimed when she saw Diddy arriving.

"Hi, Diddy!" said the four young kongs.

"Hi! How are you?" Diddy greeted them when he arrived. "Are you ready to go?"

"Of course, little friend," Chunky responded excitedly along with the other three kids. "Where will we go first?"

"What do you think of the beach?" Diddy suggested, smiling at them.

"Sounds great," Dixie replied, smiling, but then became serious. "Uhh, but there's no one who can see us in that place?"

"No, it's empty now," Diddy replied. "And don't worry, there are no dangers out there."

"Okay, no problem then," Tiny said, smiling.

"Well, then let's go," Diddy invited them. "We are not so far."

Diddy took his new friends to one of the beaches in the island, where the water was crystal clear with a calm tide, the sand was flat, and there were huge, colorful palm trees. The new kongs were amazed when they got there. It was certainly a good place to start.

"Wow, this place is fascinating!" Dixie exclaimed, admiring the place.

"Did you see? There's no danger here," Diddy replied, smiling at them. "Do you like playing in the sea?"

"We haven't done it in a while, but we liked to play in the sea," Dixie answered.

"Well, what about now?" Diddy suggested to them, making signs of invitation. "Come on, let's go to the water!"

"Let's see who gets there first!" Tiny exclaimed in a playful tone.

The five kongs immediately ran towards the sea, playfully this time. The water was very cool and there were no strong waves, so it was a perfect day for a dip.

"Hey, I don't think we've bathed on a beach like this in a while," Tiny commented. "Do you come here often, Diddy?" she asked him.

"On certain occasions," he replied. "We usually come here with my uncle Donkey and our herd friends."

"Do you have many friends?" Chunky asked him curiously.

"Well, friends as such, I would say only those from our herd and some who live far away."

"And do you have friends at school too?" Dixie asked. "You said you go to school."

Suddenly, Diddy changed his expression a little at that question, but after a few seconds, he tried to recover his smile as best he could.

"Uhh, actually... no," Diddy responded with a forced smile. "About school, I'd say the kids there *aren't so friendly*," he added, speaking generally.

"Oh, that doesn't sound fun," Chunky said with his hands at his sides.

"But hey, there's no problem with that either," Diddy added, trying to change the topic. "Well... do you think we play something?"

They had a fun time on the beach, and the new kongs seemed a little happier; the day before they were being threatened by a group of evil apes, but now they seemed to be having a few minutes of fun. For his part, Diddy was also feeling happy that he made them smile a little.

Later, they came out of the sea, and Diddy decided to take them somewhere else to continue cheering them up.

"Hey, how about we go for a walk in the jungle?" Diddy suggested to them.

"Of course," the others responded without thinking so much about it.

Then, Diddy took them into the jungle, he showed them nice places on the island, the waterfalls being the most fun places to have a great time. He also took them to other interesting sites such as the island's mines or the outer temples. The new kongs were delighted with everything, and even seemed to feel comfortable on the tour.

"Hey, Diddy, this all looks great," Chunky commented as he looked around. "Chunky is liking this island."

"I guess it wasn't a bad landing here," Dixie added, smiling.

"And I still need to introduce you to some of our animal friends," Diddy told them. "Do you want to meet them?"

Diddy also took them to meet some other animals that lived on the island, in addition to those that had accompanied him and Donkey on their last adventure...

"... He is Rambi, the rhinoceros. He helped us on our adventure with Donkey..."

"... He is Enguarde, the swordfish..."

"... He is Squawks, the parrot..."

The rest of the day, Diddy took them to many places on the island. They had such a good time that they stayed until late, almost in the evening. Finally, he took them for some coconuts to end the day.

When they were already returning to the quartet's temporary house, they were talking on the way.

"Kiddy was very mischievous," Tiny said, laughing a little. "He once spilled her baby bottle in Chunky's eyes while he was sleeping."

"Oh! Don't even talk," Dixie interrupted. "I still remember when you cut my hair and it looked like a disheveled baboon."

"Hey, I don't remember that!" Tiny replied.

"Dixie, you used to throw food in Chunky's face when you were a toddler too," Chunky added, speaking in the third person.

"I never bothered you, don't lie!" Dixie replied.

"Come on, stop your little conflicts," Diddy interrupted, laughing when he heard their anecdotes.

"Believe me, sometimes I have to put up with these three, even Chunky," Dixie pointed out.

"Hey, Chunky is older than you!" Chunky replied.

"Yes, but sometimes you act like a baby."

The kongs continued talking on the way. They began to tell many family anecdotes about themselves that even made them argue between moments, but which Diddy found somewhat funny.

"Well, we're here," Tiny said when they had reached their house.

"Today was a great day," Dixie said, smiling. "This island is nice. I loved it after all."

"It's true, Chunky hasn't gone for a walk like that in a long time," Chunky added.

"Thank you for taking us, Diddy. You're great!" Tiny said, jumping slightly.

"It's nothing. I'm glad you had a good time," Diddy responded, happy to see them happy.

"Do you want to be our new friend, Diddy?" Chunky said, giving him small pats on the head.

Hearing those words, Diddy smiled; it had been a long time since someone wanted to call him a *friend*.

"Of course! Why not?" Diddy replied, smiling at them. "By the way, do you want to go out again tomorrow?"

"*Yeah!*" the four young kongs responded, looking excited.

And so, a few days passed...

Diddy became good friends with the new kongs. When Donkey hung out with Candy or the other kongs, Diddy took the opportunity to hang out with his new friends. He played and spent time with them, took them for walks around the island, they told stories and certain anecdotes about their lives and they had a lot of fun. More and more, these four kongs looked better and seemed more confident in hanging out with Diddy and telling him about themselves. Diddy hadn't made any new contemporary friends for a while.

But Diddy kept wondering: where did the four of them come from? And why did those mandrills chase them and even want to exterminate them? Well, that detail was something that those young kongs didn't want to tell at the moment, they did not even want to mention it; every time Diddy

tried to ask them, they totally changed their mood. However, Diddy respected his decision, as he assumed it had to have been some harsh or delicate event and he also didn't want to be reckless with them.

Anyway, Diddy was feeling happier during those days. Even though he had some evil classmates who tormented him daily at school, he now had new friends to play and have fun with. His new friends had given him good impressions and were kind to him and, in the same way, Diddy was kind to them.

Chapter End Notes

That's it for the third chapter :)

I must admit that the idea of Diddy being tormented by bully children was inspired by other fanfics that I read years ago. Obviously, I did have to apply it with my own ideas, but it helped me a lot to put the story together. Same with the idea that Dixie arrived as a new one on DK Island after... a difficult past situation of her.

Chapter 4: New Home

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

It had been a couple of weeks after Diddy had saved those four new kongs, and things had gotten a little better for him too. After spending almost six hours at school putting up with his annoying classmates, the afternoons were spent with his new friends, and the whole atmosphere changed in him, even improving his mood.

Donkey and Diddy were at their house. That day was Cranky's birthday and, even though he was a grump, they still loved him and celebrated his birthday like every year.

"Hey, little buddy, we're making Cranky that dinner for his birthday today," Donkey informed. "We and Candy will prepare a huge banana cake."

"Wow, I hope that later he doesn't come out with his *'Oh, no, in my time no one celebrated birthdays with those cake antics'*" Diddy responded imitating Cranky, to which Donkey laughed.

"Buh! We'll still celebrate," said Donkey, shrugging his shoulders and finishing laughing. "He has to be happy no matter what."

"Hey, Donkey, are you going out today?"

"Just now I was going to Funky's to prepare everything. Do you want to come?"

"I'll go later. Wait for me there," Diddy responded, since, like the previous days, he was going to visit his new friends.

A few minutes passed, and then Donkey came out. After that, Diddy headed to his friends.

Diddy arrived at their house and was thinking about taking them for a walk again... But then, he stopped before the strange scene he found: the house was more deteriorated than it was before, a part of it had already collapsed... and, besides, there was no one present.

Diddy wondered where the four kongs were and decided to go look for them. He began to call each of them by name out loud, but he received no response. Until later, he saw them in the distance: they were on the shore of the beach building what seemed to be a boat. Diddy immediately headed over to where they were, wondering what they were planning.

"Hey!" Diddy called them as he arrived. "Hi! I was looking for you."

"Oh, hi, Diddy..." Dixie replied in a somewhat serious tone. "It's good that you arrived, we were going to see you."

The four of them greeted Diddy... Although this time, instead of looking happy, they had a serious expression, which seemed a bit strange to Diddy.

"Is something happening?" Diddy asked them curiously.

"The house is about to fall down, so we won't be able to live there anymore," Chunky answered.

"Yes, I realized it, I just saw it," Diddy said, before looking towards the boat they were putting together. "What is that boat for? Will we go for a walk by the sea?" he asked them with small laughs.

Suddenly, the four of them looked at each other with some seriousness at such a question, and then they looked silently at Diddy, as if they had something important to tell him.

"I think we didn't tell you, Diddy," Tiny replied in a low tone, "but... we'll try to go back to our island where we lived."

"W-what?!" Diddy exclaimed at such a sudden announcement made by his new friends. "Will you go away?"

"Yes... that's what we have to do," Dixie responded in the same way. "We'll try to find our island."

"But... you know the way, right?" Diddy asked them.

"Well, actually... no, but we'll try to get there," Dixie responded with a forced smile.

Diddy seemed quite surprised at what they were telling him; his new friends had never mentioned that to him.

"Wait, wait, wait!" Diddy exclaimed, quite confused. "Are you saying that you just go aimlessly?"

"Well, yeah, we have to go back. We have nowhere else to go," Dixie responded with a shrug. "We already ran away from those evil apes and now we just have to return to our home... If it is still there."

"We'll try to look for it," Chunky added in the same way.

Diddy was becoming more confused. He didn't understand why they wanted to leave and he was worried that something would happen to them if they left that way.

"But... Won't you get lost? Or if a storm takes you away? Or if some Kremling catches you? Or... if those apes find you again?"

"Oh, I don't think we'll see them again with the beating you gave them," Chunky responded with a shrug. "And if they find us, we'll hide better."

"So... are you serious about drifting like that?" Diddy asked them, looking at them strangely.

"We won't drift," Dixie answered, "I mean... yes, but we're in search of our previous island."

"Hey, no, what are you saying?" Diddy exclaimed as he walked towards the boat. "You can't just leave like that! You can get lost," he pointed to the sea, and then he also realized that the boat they were putting together was too small to barely fit three of them. "Uh, and sorry to get into it, but... in this little boat I don't think you're going to *survive*."

"And what does that matter?" asked Dixie. "You're not trying to stop us, are you?"

"No, don't get me wrong, I just wanted to warn you," Diddy responded in the same tone.

"Don't worry, Diddy, we'll still be friends even if we're far away," Tiny added. "We could even come visit you from time to..."

"But you say you don't know the way back," Diddy interrupted, still worried. "If you say you have nowhere to go, you could stay here if you want. I can introduce you to my other friends and we could even build you a new house... Or in any case, a more resistant boat and even take you with greater safety."

"We'd like to, little friend, but we don't want to cause any trouble," Chunky replied.

"Oh, please! You won't cause us any trouble," Diddy said as he climbed into the boat they were building. "Look, going sailing aimlessly can be very dangerous, so I recommend that you don't..." at that moment, Diddy accidentally broke a piece of the boat, since it was loose. "Oops! I'm sorry, I didn't mean to do it..." he apologized with an embarrassed smile.

"*Hey, our boat!* It cost us to build it," Tiny exclaimed, raising his voice seriously.

"I didn't mean to, I'm sorry!" Diddy apologized again. "And by the way, are you going to go on this boat? I mean..."

"Well, we can build a *better one!*" Dixie responded before lowering her voice. "Sorry, Diddy, we have to get home, no matter what."

"We'll still be your friends," Chunky added, smiling a little. "We'll be visiting you and..."

"No!" Diddy interrupted. "What I want to tell you is that: Do you know *how* to get there?"

"Well, we don't know, but..."

"Exact! You don't know how to get there; you can get lost and then..."

"No, Diddy! *Understand it!* We have to go!" Dixie exclaimed more seriously.

"But you can't just leave like that!" Diddy replied.

"*Of course, we leave!*" the four kongs responded in unison in the same tone.

There was a moment of silence after the small discussion that had broken out. Diddy didn't want them to leave, as he feared that his new friends, after having rescued them from a major attack, would get lost or something bad would happen to them. However, after warning them so much, he decided that he shouldn't interfere in their decisions and gave up.

"Okay..." Diddy sighed, getting out of the boat. "Okay, okay... You can go," he exclaimed, shrugging his shoulders and starting to walk away from them.

"*HEY, AT LEAST REPAIR THE BOAT!*" Tiny shouted in the distance.

"Leave him, Tiny. We didn't tell him before that we were leaving," Chunky said. "We'll say goodbye to him later."

The four of them were going to continue with what they were doing. After the broken boat, they would begin to assemble a more reinforced one. On the other hand, Diddy kept walking away from the four kongs; he felt frustrated and worried about them at the same time, and he was even

considering the idea of going to tell Donkey and his friends to come and help the four young kongs so that they would not be exposed to danger.

For their part, the four kongs had begun to try to retake the boat they were putting together. Suddenly, Dixie stopped while the other three kongs continued placing a piece. She stared at the boat, and then looked out to sea, as if she were now hesitating to continue.

"WAIT!... DIDDY!... DON'T GO YET!" Dixie shouted into the distance. Then, she spoke to the other three kongs. "Hey! Wait! I think it's better... we should stay here."

"What?!" exclaimed the other three, completely changing their faces. "Are you talking seriously?"

"Yes, actually... I think leaving like that could be risky," Dixie added.

"Is something happening?" Diddy asked, coming back to them, hoping that they had realized the danger they would be exposing themselves to.

"Well, on second thought... I think it would be better to change plans," Dixie said. "We don't know how to get there, so... how about we stay, do you think?"

At that moment, the faces of Tiny, Chunky and Kiddy and even Diddy's showed a big smile.

"Oh, and by the way, Diddy, how about... introduce us to your herd friends?" Dixie added, smiling.

"Yeah!" Tiny, Chunky and Kiddy exclaimed with excitement and hugged Dixie.

"Well, that's what I always suggested," Diddy said, smiling and shrugging his shoulders.

"Chunky did want to stay and meet the other Kongs," Chunky stated.

"Yeah, Dixie was the one who didn't want it," Tiny added.

"Hey, but that was at the beginning, Tiny!" Dixie replied. "And well, we're going to stay here," she added, smiling again.

"Well, and when will you introduce us to your friends and family, Diddy?" Chunky asked him excitedly.

Diddy had to think of a right time for his new friends to meet everyone else, and that same day seemed like the right time for that.

"I have an idea," Diddy said thoughtfully. "Do you know? Today is Cranky's birthday, my great-grandfather. Everyone will be gathered there, so it could be tonight. Do you think it's ok?"

"Yes, that sounds good," Dixie replied, nodding. "Just let them know we're coming."

"I want to meet them all," Tiny responded enthusiastically.

"They're not cannibals, are they?" Chunky asked, looking somewhat fearful.

"Hey, how are they going to be cannibals?" Diddy responded with his hands on his sides.

"Bah! Chunky was just joking. Uh, but joking aside, will they welcome us well?"

"Of course," Diddy exclaimed, smiling at them. "Uh, I just ask you to be patient with Cranky, you know, he's a bit grumpy and reckless," he added with a little laugh. "Okay, then we'll see you later, I'll come see you."

At night, it was Cranky's birthday celebration, and the entire Kong family was gathered to celebrate near Funky's house, which was located in front of the beach. They were all present, except for Diddy, since he had gone to see his new friends to introduce them to the others. Obviously, he had informed Donkey of that in advance, who also had no problem with the idea of receiving them.

The Kong family was gathered at a table while they sang to Cranky, and then he prepared to blow out the candles on the cake.

"Okay, Cranky, now make a wish," Funky told him.

Cranky thought for a few seconds, and the first thing that came to mind was Donkey.

"I wish Donkey wasn't so dumb and lazy anymore," he said in his mind, before continuing to blow out the candles. Afterwards, everyone applauded happily.

"And what did you wish, Cranky?" Donkey asked him in a mocking tone. "Stop being bitter?"

"You already started!" Cranky replied, annoyed. "I wished you stop being so dumb and lazy."

"Oh, wow! Really? What if I tell you that you can't say the wish because it doesn't come true later?" Donkey added, and then everyone laughed softly at the move he made to Cranky.

"Oh, no, now you're going to pay me, Donkey Kong!" Cranky exclaimed angrily and pulling out his staff, while Donkey covered himself with his arms.

"Hey, enough already!" said Candy calming the discussion. "Apologize!"

Donkey and Cranky stopped immediately. The old Kong looked at Donkey angrily, while Donkey continued laughing for having bothered his grandfather.

"It's okay, Cranky, it's your birthday, I'm sorry," Donkey apologized, trying to stop laughing.

"You don't change, boy," Cranky replied with a shrug.

"Friends, why don't we distribute the food instead?" Lanky suggested.

"But Diddy still hasn't arrived," Swanky said when he saw that the little monkey was absent. "By the way, what time is he coming with his new friends that he mentioned?"

"I think he told me he was going to their house first and then he'd bring them," Donkey answered.

"Are they kids like him too?" Lanky asked.

"Yes, three of them do," Donkey answered. "He said they are two chimpanzee girls, a little gorilla boy and an older one."

On the other hand, Diddy was arriving at the meeting point, in the company of his four new friends. While they were excited to meet new kongs at first, they were also a little nervous.

"We're close," Diddy told the four of them. "Everything will be fine, don't worry."

"And... how are we going to greet them?" Dixie asked him, appearing somewhat shyly along with the others.

"You just greet them normally; they will respond to you well."

Diddy, along with the quartet of new kongs, arrived where the Kong family was gathered around the celebration table. Everyone at the table turned to see that Diddy had arrived. At first, they looked at him with surprise when they saw that he was accompanied by four kongs that they had never seen before, but then they assumed that they were his new friends.

"Hello! I'm here," Diddy said, smiling with his teeth, before pointing at the four of them. Oh, these are my new friends, the ones I had mentioned."

There was another moment of silence, since they seemed somewhat curious about the different aspects that each of the new kongs had, since they all imagined that all four of them would be the same size as Diddy.

"Hello, Diddy's new friends!" Donkey exclaimed after a while.

Subsequently, everyone began to greet them kindly from their positions, while the four of them returned the greeting, although with some shyness.

"Look, but they're little ones like Diddy," said Funky, addressing them with energy. "Hello! How are your names?"

Funky extended his hand to the four of them, but they were still shy; they wanted to meet the other kongs on the island, but at the same time, they didn't know what to say to start talking to them. Diddy was motioning to the four of them to cheer them up to talk.

"Oh, don't be ashamed," Funky added, smiling at them. "We are cool here."

"Uhh... I'm Chunky," Chunky began saying. Then, the other three young kongs also said their names.

"Nice to meet you, Kiddy, Dixie, Tiny and Mr. Chunky," said Funky, shaking hands with each one.

Then everyone got up from their seats and went to greet the new kongs politely.

"Hello, I'm Donkey Kong, nice to meet you and welcome," Donkey continued, smiling at them. Likewise, the others continued to say their names.

"Nice to meet you too," said Tiny, speaking normally again. "Diddy told us a lot about you."

"And how did you meet Diddy?" Donkey asked them. "Is it true that he saved you? I just found out about that today."

"Yes... There were some mandrills chasing us," Dixie answered. "And then Diddy showed up and he saved us. He stopped them by making some branches fall on them, and then we shot them with

some cannons that they brought."

Everyone exclaimed with shocked and worried faces when they mentioned that act that Diddy had done. Although they had a lot of esteem for Diddy, it seemed incredible to them that a little monkey had saved four lives alone.

"You?" Cranky exclaimed, looking at Diddy strangely. "Did you save... a father with three children from... some mandrills?" he asked slowly and referring to Chunky, because of his great stature, as the father of the other three kongs.

"Has it been true, little buddy?" Donkey asked, looking amazed.

"Well, yeah... I don't know how I did it, but I did it," Diddy responded a little shyly. "And he's not a father, he's the little gorilla's older brother," he added, pointing to Chunky and then to Kiddy.

"And it's true, Diddy saved us from dying," Chunky added, confirming what he had just said.

Everyone was still confused, so they were curious to know more about those four new kongs.

"Well, why don't you tell us better at the table?" Funky suggested to them kindly. "Do you also want to have dinner with us? You are welcome here."

"Oh, sure... Thank you very much," Dixie responded together with the other three kongs happily.

The Kong family invited the four newcomers to the table. Everyone wanted to know how Diddy saved them, and they were amazed when he told everything in detail and it even seemed impossible to them that he, with his short stature and small muscles, had managed to defeat some dangerous mandrills... even if he had only used his agility to do so. It was true that he had accompanied Donkey on his adventure, but even so, they didn't really consider Diddy as a super strong Kong. Even Donkey worried about him, but at the same time, he was happy to see as his little nephew had made such a heroic act.

"And why were you being persecuted?" Funky asked the quartet while they were eating dinner.

"Who were those mandrills apes?" Lanky added.

"Hey, I guess now isn't the time to ask them that," Diddy interfered so they wouldn't ask reckless questions. "I think it's a delicate matter," he murmured softly.

Funky, Lanky, Donkey, and Candy served dinner, and while they ate, they chatted a lot more with the new kongs. Apparently, they had liked them very much and were asking more questions about them. The Kong family has always loved being kind and offering a hand to those in need.

"And where are you living now?" Funky asked them.

"We were at a house that Diddy showed us," Dixie answered.

"Wait, Diddy," Funky interrupted, frowning, "don't tell me it's that old shack held up by a tree about to fall?"

"Yes, in fact... it already fell," Diddy smiled forcedly.

"And why didn't you tell us anything before?" Donkey told them, before smiling at them. "We could build you a new house."

"I had told them that, but they were still afraid to meet you," Diddy responded, shrugging his shoulders.

"We did want to meet you, it was Dixie who didn't want to," said Tiny, pointing at Dixie.

"Hey, but that was when we had just arrived," Dixie replied, looking a little embarrassed.

"Oh, come on, we won't hurt you," Lanky said, smiling at them. "We are not bad apes."

"You will be welcome here with us," Swanky said.

The Kongs continued talking to the new ones. They had found it interesting to meet four young kongs, and they were also feeling more confident talking to them. The four of them didn't have to ask as many questions, since Diddy had told them quite a bit about the Kong family.

"Then it's just you: two brothers and two sisters," Funky concluded. "Are there just the four of you?"

"Yes... just us," Dixie replied with a small smile.

"Hey... And like I said before, how about we build them a new house?" Donkey suggested.

"Of course, I love the idea," Funky said excitedly. "Now we'll have new friends!"

"Yes, we can all work as a team," Lanky added.

"*Yeah!*" said the rest.

"Children, you will have a new house!" Lanky announced to them, earning some smiles from the four of them.

The other Kongs also agreed to the proposal to build them a new house. The four new kongs looked at each other with excitement and responded with a big smile and words of gratitude; their welcome had done them very good.

"Bah! Build a house?" Cranky objected later. "And why not have someone pick them up at home and that's it?"

"Grandpa!" Donkey exclaimed contradictorily.

"Oh, just kidding, of course we can," Cranky added, laughing a little, before becoming serious again. "I just hope they are good children, not clowns like my grandson and great-grandson."

"Cranky!" Donkey and Diddy exclaimed in unison at the old kong's imprudence.

"Come on! Don't start your dramas," Wrinkly added, calming them. "These children look very calm."

"Okay, okay, just kidding too," Cranky said. "Okay, tomorrow we can start plans for the house."

"Well, but... where are we going to sleep?" Tiny asked seriously.

"I can put together some quick temporary rooms for you," Funky suggested. "So that you have your space."

"You can stay near our house," Wrinkly added kindly. "And if you need anything, just let us know, okay?"

Afterwards, they continued chatting with the new kongs, obviously without asking them reckless questions. Apparently, the four of them already felt safer on the island seeing that they had landed in a good place with good inhabitants of their same species to welcome them. And, as expected, they also continued with Cranky's celebration, which ended with the opening of gifts.

Since their temporary house had collapsed, the four new kongs stayed the night at Cranky and Wrinkly's house, while Funky set up a small temporary house for them to sleep there in later days.

The next day, Funky invited all the Kongs to his house to eat, and then they made plans to start building the new house for the new Kong quartet. Later, all the members of the Kong family headed to the site where they would build it. It was a quiet space within the jungle, surrounded by tall trees.

"This is the place where we will build your house, do you like it?" Funky asked the four new young kongs.

"*Yeah!*" the four kongs responded very happily.

"Ok, let's begin!" Donkey said in the same way.

"First we must look for the materials," said Funky.

"Hey, can we help?" Chunky asked with a pleading look along with his younger brother and his two cousins.

"Oh, no, no, the new ones won't have to worry," Funky replied, calming them down.

The four of them gave another pleading look, as they were excited and wanted to help as well.

"Oh, come on, we want to help with our new house," Dixie added with some excitement. "Can we?"

"Well, well, okay," Funky said, smiling at them. "So, I'll make a list of what everyone needs to do, okay?"

And then, all the kongs got to work and began to collaborate. Funky and Donkey assigned the others what each one should do. First, they had to get materials, including wood and vines, enough to build a Kong-style house. After searching for the materials, they began to build the house. The four new kongs also helped, including Cranky and Wrinkly. Not all of them were expert builders, but they still made the effort, since it had to be a comfortable house for four young kongs.

It had taken them approximately three weeks to finish the house, since they wanted it to be well done, and it had turned out great. Now, the new kongs would have a new home to live in.

The house was ready and all the Kongs gathered to see it.

"Well, children, this is your new house," said Funky, leading the four of them to observe the property.

The house was two levels and the style was similar to what the other Kongs' houses were like; it had everything necessary for them to live in good conditions. Finally, these new kongs now had a place to live in peace after a risky fugitive life.

"It's fabulous!" Tiny exclaimed, very fascinated.

"Now we have a place to live!" Chunky added in the same way.

"We're glad you liked it," Donkey said, smiling at them.

"And by the way, I was thinking... What if we have a party to celebrate?" Funky suggested to them. "Something like a welcome for the four of you, just between us. Even if you have already arrived weeks ago."

"Yeah!" they all responded excitedly.

"Please, another party?!" Cranky objected.

"Calm down, Cranky, don't start objecting, please," Diddy said, calming him down.

"Yes, Grandpa," Donkey added. "Don't be a pooper..."

"Calm down too," Diddy interrupted, calming Donkey in case they started to argue.

"Well, then, how about tomorrow night?" Funky suggested, receiving affirmative responses from the others.

The four new kongs were very happy, not only because of their new house, but also because of how well the others had received them. Likewise, the others were excited to have new friends. From what was known about them, Chunky was a tall gorilla, but his manner was that of a child, apart from being somewhat nervous, but he always liked to make others smile; Kiddy was a toddler who didn't talk much due to his young age and was like a baby, his great height seemed to be due to him and his brother's genetics; Tiny was a very happy and playful child who, although sometimes she used to argue with her sister, deep down she loved her very much and admired her; and lastly there was Dixie, who was like the older sister of the three, but still, she had the energetic spirit of a child her age.

Chapter End Notes

That's it for this chapter. I'm going to advance something, but from chapters 1 to 12 it is like an introductory part, practically what the first part of the synopsis says. From chapter 13 starts

the main plot. I say this so that you can calm down a little and enjoy while things are still "calm" in the story.

Chapter 5: An Untold Secret

Chapter Notes

This chapter will be longer.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

The next morning, Diddy was walking to school. Although he had been in a better mood during those days, it disappeared when it was time to go to Kong Kollege. He wished he didn't have to go, but it was a good custom that every Kong should receive a school education, especially if he wanted to become a hero like Donkey one day.

Upon arriving at school, Diddy detected no sign of his annoying classmates, so he calmly passed by to try to get to the classroom... or at least he tried.

"There's that monkey!" Jemky pointed out, appearing behind Diddy, and then the other three bully kids crowded against him and began to grab his limbs to attack him. Diddy was going to react and try to hit him back, but it didn't work.

"No!... LET ME GO!" Diddy pleaded as he tried to get out of the four kids. Generally, they were stronger than him and he almost never managed to win a fight against them.

Suddenly, Jemky slammed him to the ground while the other three kids trampled on his limbs. Diddy began to get more desperate, to the point of having to act defensively, and as best he could, he spontaneously kicked Jemky in the face; it was so strong that the latter screamed in pain.

"Ahhh! Worm-faced vermin monkey!" the orangutan boy shouted as he rubbed his face.

The other three children of the group went to help Jemky, who had a bruise on his nose due to the blow he received from Diddy.

"Are you okay, Jemky?" Mandrew told him and, immediately, the bully kids glared at Diddy. He just smiled at them, showing his teeth.

"Finish him off!" Rocky yelled.

Again, the four of them lunged at Diddy. He was going to escape until Rocky grabbed him by the tail and turned him upside down before Mandrew grabbed him by the neck aggressively.

"Listen to me, you stupid dwarf!" Mandrew warned him, while Diddy made a pleading face. "You know it's not good for you to counterattack us!"

"I-I'm sorry, I didn't mean to..."

Immediately, Diddy received a hard blow to the eye from Mandrew, causing a bruise. Diddy screamed in pain, much louder than Jemky. That was the main reason why he didn't usually defend himself well against them, since they always hit him back harder no matter what.

"Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't mean to," Mandrew repeated in a sarcastic tone.

"Well, you already know what our rules are, little lizard," Rocky added, taking him by the neck. *"Don't tell Wrinkly or your uncle... or you'll see what we're capable of! Did you hear?!"*

Diddy became so enraged by the blow he had received and, standing upside down, he rushed in to give some quick slaps in the face, this time to Mandrew and Rocky, getting them to let go of him. Diddy didn't stay any longer and ran out of there as fast as he could, while the four of them went after him, until they finally lost sight of him.

"This shameless monkey!" Rocky exclaimed, trying to look for him with the group.

"That idiot is going to pay me dearly!" Jemky added as he held his nose. *"Just wait!"*

Diddy continued running until he got back to his house and entered it with such desperation. He didn't want to go back to school again for the moment and had almost collapsed. He closed the door immediately while he was breathing heavily, although he didn't notice the presence of Donkey, who was coming out of his room.

Donkey saw Diddy arrive and noticed that he was exhausted, desperate... and with a bruised eye, although Diddy tried to regain his normal posture.

"Diddy! What happened? Why did you come back early?... Huh?! But what happened to your eye?!" Donkey exclaimed, shocked when he saw Diddy's eye in that state.

"Uhh, n-nothing, I just... I fell out of a tree," Diddy said quickly and trying to cover his eye; his last words were the first thing he could think to say.

"Oh, no!" Donkey exclaimed, stamping his feet forward. "Don't tell me they were your so-called friends."

"What?! Oh, you're about to start. Why would they do something like that to me?" Diddy replied, trying to imply that Donkey was crazy.

"That face doesn't convince me, I know they did that and *now at this very moment I'm going to go talk to them*," Donkey said firmly.

"What?!" Hey, what are you saying?!" Diddy exclaimed, panicking. "Wait, wait! Why would you want to talk to them? I do not think that..."

"Nothing to wait for!" Donkey pushed Diddy away from the door, before leaving. "You don't want to tell me but I know, my instinct doesn't fail! Besides, this isn't the first time you've come home with an injury like that."

"But I already told you that I fell from a tree!" Diddy exclaimed, begging that Donkey won't talk to the four bully kids.

"Oh, of course, from a tree. And then why are you so scared?" Donkey replied ironically, and then ran straight towards the school.

"Donkey!"

Diddy tried to catch up and stop him, but Donkey was already going further away. He began to panic, since he didn't want Donkey to go to Kong Kollege to talk to that quartet, much less for him to bring up that topic with them. He had begun to shake in despair.

Donkey arrived at the school with a confrontational attitude and saw the group of Diddy's "friends" gathered, whom he then approached. Diddy, who was behind Donkey, decided to hide in the bushes to watch, fearing what would happen. At that moment, he felt his blood running inside his body.

"*You!*" Donkey exclaimed and, immediately, the four kids turned to look at him. "*You know who I am, right?*"

The group of bully children stood still and just looked at each other as if they didn't know what to say.

"Uhh, you seem familiar to me, sir," Melenky told him with a forced smile.

"By any chance, you... haven't hit Diddy in the eye, *huh?*" Donkey told them directly and giving them a hardened look.

"What?!" Mandrew exclaimed, looking shocked. "And why would we do something like that to Diddy? We haven't done anything to him."

"Are you sure?!" Donkey exclaimed, raising his voice. "And then what happened to him! Did you do something to him?!"

"O-of course not!" replied Rocky, looking at him strangely. "Hey, Mr. Donkey, what's this about? Why do you accuse us like this?"

"If Diddy is our friend," Jemky added in the same way. "Why do you tell us that? I don't know what you're talking about."

"*Huh, no?!*" Donkey exclaimed angrily. "Diddy, come here!"

Diddy came out of the bush shaking with fear and with his eye black, hoping that the quartet kids weren't thinking he had reported them.

"Check this out!" Donkey said as he picked up Diddy and pointed to his eye. "*Tell me if it wasn't you.*"

The four kids seemed not to know what to say, although deep down they could see that they wanted to massacre Diddy, since they might have thought that he had already reported them and they only looked at him out of the corner of their eye, while Diddy could feel the thirst for revenge in them.

"Uhh, Donkey, I already told you I fell out of a tree and that's all," Diddy reaffirmed with a shaky voice as an excuse for the group.

"Ohh, that. Yes, that's true," Jemky playing along, showing the wound on his nose. "We were playing with Diddy and suddenly we fell out of a tree. Just look at my nose!"

"Hey, but we didn't know that Diddy had hit himself in the eye," Melenky added in the same way. "Diddy, why didn't you tell us?"

"Or rather, weren't you fighting?!" Donkey interrupted, still looking at them suspiciously.

“Good morning, children!” Wrinkly appeared, and the situation calmed down immediately “Oh, Donkey, good morning! What are you doing here...”

"Wrinkly! You must keep a good eye on these children. Look!" Donkey interrupted, showing Diddy's black eye. "I'm sure they did this to Diddy."

"Hey, no, it's not true..." Diddy hastened to say trying to "save" the situation. "Of course not, I fell from a tree while playing with my friends, but Donkey doesn't want to believe me, he's speculating around. Look, Jemky was also injured."

"Yes, I hit my nose and Diddy in the eye," Jemky added, rubbing his nose. "Diddy got scared and wanted to go home after we fell."

"Yes, it was that," Diddy added, going with the flow. "I went to the house to tell Donkey to help my wound, but he came out saying out of nowhere that my friends did this to me."

"Oh, it can't be! Poor children," Wrinkly sympathized, placing her hands on Diddy and Jemky's shoulders. "Now I'll put a bandage on you, and you should be more careful the next time you walk in the trees, my little ones."

"Grandma! Do you ignore my guess?" Donkey exclaimed in frustration.

Wrinkly never realized what was really going on, as she always thought that all her students were well-behaved and wouldn't be capable of any cruelty.

"Donkey, but what are you saying? My students are very well-behaved and get along very well with each other," Wrinkly told him. "Where did you get those ideas?"

"You see, I always look at Diddy with fear when he comes to school, he doesn't want to talk to me about his friends, and the last thing he told me was that they were fighting and..."

"No, no, no! That was before, we're not fighting anymore," Diddy interrupted, trying to deflect the matter. "It had been just a silly fight."

"Well, as far as I've seen, Diddy *gets along very well* with his friends," Wrinkly told Donkey. "I don't understand why you come to say such *accusations*; Diddy himself just said that he fell from the tree."

"But, Grandma! You'd better keep an eye on them," Donkey insisted. "It's serious."

"But if Diddy just explained it, boy!" Wrinkly replied. "They're saying they only had one accident... Oh, and look! It's getting late, class is about to start. Come on, kids, come in!"

"B-but... Oh, these grandparents of mine!" Donkey complained quietly.

Wrinkly, along with the five students, began to head toward the classroom. The quartet of bad kids looked menacing but sneakily at Diddy, while Diddy tried to stay serious in Wrinkly's presence.

Diddy only said goodbye to Donkey from a distance with an uncertain look, while the latter was only frustrated, mostly by Wrinkly's disbelief. And also, Diddy didn't want to speak the truth... He feared that a conflict would be generated, he even felt terrible that he could not have spoken about it at that moment he had the opportunity.

At night, Donkey changed Diddy's blindfold and cleaned his eye with medicinal products. For his part, Diddy stuck with his excuse that he had "fallen from a tree." Still, Donkey seemed unconvinced; he sensed that something bad was happening to Diddy regarding his "friends", he noticed it since the school year began. Diddy just kept quiet about the issue.

Later, they headed towards the new house of the new kongs: Dixie, Tiny, Kiddy and Chunky, since, as Funky had planned, there was going to be a welcome party for them.

The party was going to be celebrated outside the new house, and everything was being prepared. There was a small stage with lots of jungle-style lights and ornaments, and the kongs waited for everyone to arrive. Of course, this time it was a small party only between the Kong family along with Kiddy, Chunky, Dixie, and Tiny.

Then, Donkey and Diddy arrived, and greeted the others.

"Hi, bros!" Funky greeted them. "Good thing you arrived."

"Hi, Funky. How is it going?" Donkey asked with joy. "Have you already started?"

"Not yet, you have to wait a few minutes while I sort out some things. And, by the way, there will be games!"

"Great!" Diddy replied with emotion.

"Huh! What do you have in your eye, Diddy?" Funky asked him as he noticed his blindfolded eye.

"Uhh, I fell from a tree while playing with my friends at school," Diddy replied, sounding as truthful as he could. Donkey just became serious and moved his head side to side as he remembered the matter.

"Woah, brother! You should be more careful," Funky suggested. "Don't throw yourself like that or you can scatter... Well, bros, I have to keep ordering everything, see you," he added before going to continue with the preparations.

"Donkey Kong!" said a female voice that Donkey recognized immediately.

"Candy!" Donkey exclaimed, turning to look at his girlfriend. "Oh, you look beautiful as always."

Suddenly, the Kong couple embraced, and they began to say love flattery to each other as usual.

"You look so handsome, honey," Candy replied, before noticing Diddy. "Oh, hi, Diddy, how have you been... Uhh, excuse me, what's happened to your eye?"

"According to him, he fell from a tree," Donkey replied, not so convinced yet, before continuing to talk to Candy. "And how are you doing, my little piece of heaven?"

Then, Donkey with Candy started with their affairs, their nicknames and their flirtations of couples... earning a few strange looks from Diddy; he liked to see them together, although sometimes he became funny and somewhat cloying when they started to get romantic.

"They've already started," Diddy said quietly and shrugged.

As Donkey stayed with Candy, Diddy headed off to see what the others were doing. He went to Lanky, who was preparing the meal.

"Hi, Lanky," Diddy said with a smile.

"Hi, Diddy, how do you... Huh! And your eye?" Lanky said interruptedly when the first thing that caught his attention was Diddy's blindfolded eye.

"Uh, I just fell from a tree," Diddy replied, somewhat uncomfortable that he had asked him that.

"Oh, be careful next time, little kid. Don't go hurting yourself like that," Lanky said, patting Diddy on the head, then left to hand out food.

Diddy had nothing to do at the time; Donkey was with Candy, Lanky delivering food, Funky with the preparations, and Cranky and Wrinkly were just talking about their younger days, so he wouldn't go to meet them either.

"Hey, Diddy!" Wrinkly called him as she saw him pass.

"Hi, Wrinkly," Diddy replied, greeting her and heading towards her.

"How about you, little kid? How is your eye?"

"It's all good. It only hurts a little," he replied, half-smiling.

"Well, with the days you'll recover, dear," Wrinkly said, smiling at him.

"Yes... I hope so, too," Diddy said, staying normal.

"Oh, and by the way, Diddy... only I want you to tell me something," Wrinkly said, staring at him, which began to make Diddy tense. "Did you and Jemky really fall from a tree?... Weren't you fighting or something?"

Diddy became much more tense when he saw that Wrinkly might have some suspicions of the matter just like Donkey. He felt an enormous urge to tell the truth, but he couldn't; he didn't want to think about what might happen next if he did.

"Uh, no... We really fell from a tree," Diddy replied with a forced smile before making up a false story. "What happened was that the five of us were playing on the branches of the tree, and then Melenky started jumping and the branch loosened. Mandrew, Melenky and Rocky managed to hold each other, but Jemky and I couldn't. And then I ran to Donkey to help me with the wound, but he made up another story."

Diddy begged in his mind that his false story had sounded believable. Wrinkly stared at him for a few seconds as she analyzed whether what Diddy said was true, until she then nodded.

"Okay, okay, Diddy," Wrinkly said before giving a sigh. "I just want to tell you one thing: any inconvenience you may have... I'm here to help you, don't forget."

Diddy was silent for a while; he needed to tell the whole real situation, but at the same time, fear won him. He just smiled at Wrinkly and continued to assure her that everything was fine.

Diddy kept going around to see what the other kongs were doing. Dixie, Tiny, Kiddy and Chunky were gathered at the table along with Swanky, who told them of his stories. Immediately, Diddy joined them to see his friends.

"... and that's how I got my gold tooth," Swanky told his stories as an entrepreneur ape. "Not easy as you could tell," he added with a few small laughs.

"Wow!" exclaimed the four young kongs in unison.

"Hey, hi, Diddy!" Tiny said as she saw Diddy arrive, and everyone turned to see him.

"Hi, Diddy!" exclaimed the rest. Suddenly... they were also shocked to see Diddy blindfolded.

"Huh! But what happened to his..." Chunky was going to ask until Diddy interrupted him.

"Uhh, I just fell from a tree while playing with my school friends, that's all," Diddy repeated his excuse for the umpteenth time and tried to smile.

"Oh, Diddy, you need to be more careful when you go over the trees," Swanky added.

"Come and hear Swanky's stories, they're very interesting," Chunky said, smiling. "Chunky found them funny."

Swanky kept telling of his luxurious life while the others listened to him. But a while later, Diddy retired, as he had already heard those stories a bunch of times.

Actually, Diddy was somewhat discouraged by his eye. He wanted to be excited for the party and share good times with others, but everyone asked him only for his eye as soon as they saw him, and that made him remember the bad time he had at school. In turn, he was tired of repeating the same lie that he fell from a tree. It was not the first time that his four bad classmates left him with physical injuries because of the fights.

Diddy didn't know what else to do, so he went to sit on a rock behind the stage. He stood there for a few minutes thinking about how fake his school friends turned out to be, how they became school bullies to him, and that he couldn't tell Wrinkly or Donkey about that inconvenience, fearing those four kids would cause major harm if he reported them.

"Diddy?" someone arriving at that same place said. Diddy realized it was just Dixie. "What are you doing around here?"

"Uh... Nothing, I just came to stay here for a while," he replied with a dull tone and lowering his gaze.

"Oh, you're sore from your eye, aren't you?" Dixie asked him as she sat next to him. "How did you fall from a tree?"

Diddy, about to want to explode, was tired of repeating the same excuse when someone asked him that question; he wanted for a moment to be completely honest about the situation.

"Well... I didn't really fall from any trees," Diddy said, sighing in frustration.

"And then?"

"It was my classmates," Diddy replied anguished, before opening his eyes to the fullest at what he had just said. "Uhh, I-I mean... No..."

"What?" Dixie exclaimed, looking at him strangely. "Classmates?..."

"No, no, no!" Diddy was left not knowing what else to say. "J-just I fell off the tree while playing with my *classmates*," he finished trying to fix the answer.

"Did you mean... that your classmates did that to you?" Dixie asked him as if she no longer believed such an excuse.

Diddy couldn't help but put on a face of some indignation after hearing what was really happening to him. Suddenly, he was exposed to the truth. He just sighed and looked down again.

"Well... Yes... Yes, that," he replied unconfidently and looking away. "Uh, b-but don't tell anyone, please!" he added with despair at such an attack of sincerity that he had... He had never said it before, and as if he had thought aloud at the time, he mentioned anything about it for the first time.

"What?... Oh, don't worry, I don't say anything," Dixie said with a small laugh as she saw Diddy's change of reaction. "But why? I don't think classmates are that bad... Or was it really a bad situation?"

"Well... is that you wouldn't understand... It's a long explanation."

"Oh, I'm sorry. Okay, if you want to, don't tell it now," Dixie replied apologetically. "Huh, sorry to ask, but is it something serious or similar?"

Diddy didn't know whether to tell her or not. Although deep down he needed to tell someone, the fear of what might happen next dominated him, he had even regretted saying that... But after thinking about it for a moment, he had realized that he had already been very obvious in front of Dixie; She was one of his new friends, who had been a refuge for him in those last days, and perhaps because of that he had been invaded by the attack of sincerity.

"Well, you'll see... J-Just don't tell anyone this, do you?" Diddy said, trying to take courage to tell it, which by the way, was the first time he had spoken it. "It's just... Four classmates of mine always bother me at school, and this morning while they were beating me, I fought back and then they hit me back in the eye... And I lied to Donkey that I had only fallen from a tree."

"Really? But why did they do that to you?... And why didn't you tell Donkey?" Dixie asked as she realized the situation wasn't that simple. "Are those children really that bad?"

"It's... a long history with those four," Diddy replied with his eyes lowered. "I've never really been able to tell it well."

"Oh... Okay, I guess it's kind of hard, right?" Dixie said in a tone of compassion, and Diddy just nodded with a low look. "You know? Whatever happened, I think you should tell Donkey, from what I see."

"I can't do it," Diddy replied, trying not to lose his cool. "I mean... I think you'd have to know what happened to understand it, sorry."

Dixie watched him with some strangeness; she seemed not yet to understand Diddy's situation and was surprised by the attitude he was having, since he had never shown himself like this in front of his new friends.

"Diddy... You can talk about it if you want," she said, trying to cheer him up. "Sure, if you feel ready. I don't think it's a good idea to keep things to yourself when it's a serious situation like you're mentioning."

"Okay, but please... Seriously, *don't* tell anyone," Diddy pleaded with his eyes.

Diddy, although hesitating a little, dared to tell a story that he had not been able to reveal even to Donkey... Something that had been tormenting him for a long time...

As I told you, I have some classmates at school who are annoying cretins. They were my friends at first, in fact, with the only ones in the classroom I've ever hung out with. I met them about a year ago, in the last school cycle.

Diddy began by telling his first day of school, where a new school year was beginning. Everything was new to him, as almost all of his classmates were new. He, during break hours, went out and tried to talk to all his new classmates; with the previous ones he had had, he had formed good friendships, but these were no longer there and he no longer had anyone to hang with. He went to a group of three kong children to speak to them.

"Hello, how are you?!" Diddy said to the group.

But the three of them just looked at him with a strange face as if they had been greeted by a stranger they didn't want to meet.

"Hello," one of them replied with the greatest indifference, and after that they walked away.

Diddy shrugged at that bad gesture, so he went to a group of two kong girls to try again.

"Hello," Diddy greeted them. "What are your names?"

"None of your business, monkey," one of them replied, looking at him strangely, and they walked away too.

Diddy, being ignored again, went to another group of four orangutan and chimpanzee children. This time, he would have more hope of making new friends.

"Hello... Uh, I'm Diddy"

But everyone in the groups looked at him as if he seemed like a weird kid to them. They didn't say anything to him and walked away from him almost instantly. Diddy, seeing that no one wanted to talk to him, was frustrated and had no choice but to go and sit in a corner by himself.

"Hey, monkey!" someone called him suddenly.

Diddy turned to look. The callers were another group of four kong children to whom he had not yet spoken to them.

"Are you alone?" one of those children asked him. "Come here."

Diddy thought about it for a few seconds, but then agreed and approached that group made up of an orangutan, a mandrill, a red-shanked langur and a capuchin monkey. This group of children, unlike the rest, did want to talk to him, although Diddy did not take it that way at first.

"Come, don't look at us like that. Nobody wants to talk to us either," the orangutan boy said with a few small laughs. "We can be your friends if you want. What's your name?"

"Uh... I'm Diddy," he replied, still looking at them strangely.

"Okay, Diddy. I am Jemky, and they are Mandrew, Melenky and Rocky," he pointed to each one, and they greeted Diddy smiling at him. "And yes, we are just like you, nobody here wants to meet to us."

"Yes, all kids here are kind of unfriendly," Rocky added, shrugging.

"Kids are weird here," Mandrew said likewise.

"Are you from this island, Diddy?" Melenky asked.

"Absolutely," Diddy replied, starting to take a little confidence and smiling back. "Don't you?"

"No, we're from a small island near here," replied Mandrew. "Its name is Z Island."

"We travel every day," Melenky added. "Our dads signed us up for this school... although we didn't want to."

"So, you also come from another school?" Diddy asked them.

"Well, before we came here, we were in a shelter," Rocky replied. "But... we had some problems there and our dads took us out."

"Now tell us about yourself, little monkey," Jemky continued, smiling at him. "How long have you been at this school?"

"Do you like adventures?" Mandrew added in the same way.

They looked very friendly, so I kept talking to them. Days later, we hung out at break or in free hours. There was nothing wrong with them apparently, so we became good friends, since just like me, no one in the classroom wanted to talk to them. We were like those excluded from the class, but at least we were a group and we had a good time.

"Hey, let's play 'the rolled monkey'," Mandrew once said.

"Oh, right! Let Rocky be the rolled," Melenky said.

"And why am I?" Rocky replied. "Better you."

At that time, I liked them very much. They were just a bit rough to play with and sometimes made heavy jokes, but I didn't take it such importance back then. There were even times when they would come to DK Island in the afternoons and we would go out to play.

"Hey, Diddy, do you want to go with us tomorrow afternoon to see our island?" Jemky proposed on another occasion. "It's not far away."

"We'll do a lot of fun things there," Melenky added with emotion. "Come on, Diddy!"

"Sounds great," Diddy replied, smiling at them. "I'll tell Donkey and then let you know, okay?"

I agreed to go. For a couple of months, everything had gone well with them, so there would be no problem... Or at least that's what I thought until I went with them to their island.

"Hey, but what place is that?" Diddy asked, looking confused. "And why do you disguise yourselves like that?"

"Because only adult apes are allowed to buy here," whispered Jemky who was standing on Mandrew's shoulders, and both had put a long jacket around to simulate a tall stature. The two also carried a sack with various objects, and then entered a corner between large bushes to be absent for a while.

"And what are they for?" Diddy pointed to the sack.

"Oh, they're jewels. They were from an ape gentleman and we took them," Rocky replied with a shrug. "Jemky and Mandrew will go sell them to get our sweets. We will leave some for you too, don't worry."

"Did you take them?" Diddy asked, looking at them strangely. "So, did you *steal them*?"

"We didn't steal them," Melenky replied. "That gentleman had left them in a corner for a while and then we took them and that's it."

"Done! We already got those sweets with millipedes," Jemky exclaimed, returning with Mandrew, before coming down from his shoulders.

Jemky brought a tray with what appeared to be colorful candy lollipops, while Mandrew carried a box, which he later opened and showed a pile of millipedes running inside it. Diddy just looked weirdly at these elements.

"And... what is that for?" Diddy asked them.

"You'll see," Jemky replied, smiling at him. "We will let you try, don't worry."

The quartet headed into another corner, and Diddy followed. Upon arriving there, Diddy was confused and surprised at what his friends at the time began to do: they had lit a fire, on which they placed a container containing a liquid that they had extracted from the millipedes by squeezing them. Following that, the four of them took a sweet lollipop each and started smearing them on it, and even handed one to Diddy.

"B-But what is this?" Diddy asked, looking strangely at them and the lollipop.

"Try them! You'll like them," Melenky said, giving him a little push. "They will only make you laugh."

"B-but this is... *millipede venom*, isn't it?" Diddy replied.

"Yes, but fear not, it won't hurt you," Jemky told him. "On the contrary... It will be the best thing you've ever tasted."

Then, the four of them tasted the covered lollipops as if they were any other candy, while Diddy was still hesitant to do so. Suddenly... the four kids began to show smiles on their faces that turned into sudden laughter, which earned some odd looks from Diddy.

"Hey, try it, what are you waiting for?!" Mandrew told him as he laughed as he spoke. "Try it!" he exclaimed, giving him a little push.

The four of them were now laughing nonstop and for no reason, which was all the odd thing for Diddy. Then, for a moment of curiosity, Diddy was going to give the lollipop a little taste, but as soon as he had the first contact, he expelled it immediately and almost let go of the lollipop.

"But what the heck is this?!" Diddy exclaimed in extreme disgust. "This tastes *horrible!*"

"Yeah, yeah, that's what we thought at first!" Jemky replied amid laughter. "B-but then it's great!"

"Try it, Diddy, don't be boring!" Mandrew said, giving him a push and laughing out loud.

Diddy just looked at them with some disgust now, and was even uncomfortable with the situation, so he just threw the lollipop and even wanted to get away from the group.

"Hey, why do you throw it?! Don't waste it!" Rocky replied as if he wanted to reproach him, but without ceasing to laugh at the same time.

Things were changing when I started going out with them to their island where they live . They were no longer the same ones I thought I had met and began to show their bad attitudes. They stole the belongings of others and then ran away and later even sold them, and with that... they only bought those strange sweets with millipede venom. They also liked to play jokes and annoy other animals, especially those that were younger.

"Look, we're going to take the toy from that little monkey," Mandrew pointed to a little kong child, who was playing with a small toy monkey near a stream.

"What?" But we can't do that," Diddy objected. "You said we were going to make jokes, but not of this kind."

"You just watch," Mandrew replied with a mischievous smile.

The group went up to the little kong boy and snatched his toy. Afterwards, they threw him into the stream and laughed at him as he began to cry. They even later pushed the little kong into the water.

"Hey, but what's wrong with you?!" Diddy replied after seeing his wickedness. "It's a little boy!"

"Oh, relax, Diddy. This is fun," Melenky replied as if it were a simple game. "Look at that gentleman over there!" he pointed to an adult Kong who was walking. "I think we should make him fall down."

"Let's throw stones at him so he stumbles and then take anything he has," Jemky added, smiling maliciously. "Let's go!"

Subsequently, the group went to where they had seen the adult kong. Meanwhile, Diddy stayed to rescue the toy of the little kong boy and then return him and, of course, help him too.

They went like that for a few days, and for almost all the bad jokes and misdeeds they made, I was trying to help their victims in some way, and without them noticing. I told those four that it was not right what they did, but they took it as a joke, and even behaving like that seemed to make them feel good.

"Hey, where are you going, Diddy?! Jemky exclaimed, pulling Diddy's shirt as he was taking some jewelry that they had stolen from someone. "Oh, don't tell me that you were going to give them back to that gorilla lady?!"

"What's wrong with you, Diddy?" Mandrew replied, looking at him reproachfully. "Don't want to be part of our group? Aren't you our friend?"

"Sure, but don't you realize what you're doing? I mean, you are *stealing*, you are taking other people's objects, that is not...

"Oh, Diddy, Diddy!" interrupted Rocky. "Look, it's not the first time we've done this, you just go with the flow... Think that with all these things we can get many sweets, and above all... A lot of those *lollipops with millipedes*," he added, whispering in the last sentence.

"But not this way!" Diddy replied in opposition. "And those millipedes are..."

"Oh, don't be boring, Diddy!" Mandrew said, giving him a little push. "Don't be silly, just relax and have fun with us."

"Yeah, stop being a silly kid," Melenky added in the same way. "We will make you try more of the millipede sweets so that you pass."

I didn't like them anymore; I didn't even want to consider them friends anymore and I only hung out with them to see what evils they did and try to remedy them. But everything was worse afterwards...

"Well, Diddy, it looks like you're already one of us, and we brought you a gift," Jemky said, pulling what appeared to be a gun out of a bag and handed it to Diddy. There were other guns in the bag, which looked complex enough to be for children their age.

"Wow! Will we play soldiers or something?" Diddy asked them curiously as he looked at it in his hands.

"Will *we play*, you say?" said Mandrew in a mocking tone. "But if they are real guns, the ones that shoot."

"But what?!" Diddy exclaimed in shock. "And where did you get them?"

"Our dads gave them to us for our birthdays," Jemky replied excitedly, as each of the group picked up a gun.

"And look, we kept one for you so you can join us in our *games too*," Rocky added in a tone of malice.

"With these we will get someone's belongings more easily," Mandrew exclaimed with emotion.

"Oh, no, no, no, not like that!" Diddy countered, leaving the gun on the ground. "This is already too much!"

"Hey, but what do you say?!" Melenky replied, looking at him strangely. "Don't you want to play with us?"

"No!" Diddy replied. "You guys already go too far, I'm not going to be like you, and..."

Suddenly, Jemky grabbed him by the shirt, gave him a threatening look, and immediately pointed the gun at his head. Diddy froze and began to feel instantly terrified at this unexpected gesture.

"Diddy... *You will be like us, you are already one of us,*" Jemky told him, looking at him in a threatening way. "Oh, and *be careful* to tell Wrinkly or whoever about this because if not... we'll end you!" he added, pressing the gun further against his head and then releasing him abruptly. "Now pick that up and join us. And put the magazine on it! If not, it's not going to work," he ordered, picking up and handing him the gun magazine.

I followed them, and they began to do the same evils, only this time, they stole the belongings of their victims pointing those weapons at them, and that gave them more facilities to do so.

"This is a robbery, sir!" Jemky exclaimed as the four pointed with the guns at an adult ape carrying jewels, which they snatched without consideration, before running away. Surreptitiously, Diddy took the jewels again and returned them to the ape later.

They forced me to do the same as them, but as much as possible I also kept trying to help their victims. Now I had to be careful that they did not discover me, since they told me that if I was not like them, they would also end me. They turned out to be robbers after all.

"Give me that!" Melenky ordered another ape, snatching a bag, but he resisted him.

"What's wrong with you, brat boy?!" replied the ape.

"Huh, aren't you going to give it to us?!" Jemky replied, pulling out his gun and pointing it at the ape's stomach.

The rest of the quartet also drew their guns and, instantly, left that ape paralyzed and took his belongings. Although, minutes later, Diddy returned with them and returned them to the ape, making a gesture of silence to him before returning to the group.

At the end of that same day, when they were going to cross the line, I decided to stop them in any way; I couldn't let them do worse.

"Well, from what I see, you *don't know how to use a gun*, Diddy," Jemky said, looking at him in disgust. "But we're going to teach you!"

"But!" Diddy exclaimed in confusion. "I... I don't want to!"

"We'll teach you, *I SAID!*" Jemky replied, grabbing Diddy by the arms, who was also carrying a gun in his hand. "Look, you grasp it so firmly with one hand. Then, with the other, you pull back from here and also grab it tightly so that the shot does not deflect. Then, you just aim, pull the trigger with the center of your finger and you're done. Now give it a try!"

Diddy, feeling enormous discomfort, proceeded to do as he was told and, although trembling to do so, fired a few times into nothingness, at the same time feeling a discomfort in his ears from the noise that the shots generated.

"Not bad, but don't tremble!" Rocky replied. "You need to practice more! Let's go!"

Diddy kept "practicing" the shot for a while, while he had around the threatening looks of his "friends" at the time.

"Well, now let's put it into practice," Jemky said.

Later, Mandrew and Melenky arrived carrying a small sack, in which something was seen moving inside it. On a rock, they placed what was inside the sack: it was a baby bird who was crying and scared.

"Now shoot him," Rocky ordered Diddy as if nothing had happened.

"*What?! B-but it's a baby and...*"

"And what? Babies have no memory, they won't feel anything," Mandrew added with a shrug.

"Oh, no, that's not, *you're really crazy, what's wrong with you?!*" Diddy reproached them earnestly. "*You guys weren't like that!* You are not the friends I know..."

"*Just do it, don't be a coward!*" Mandrew replied, slapping him down. "Show that you are one of us!"

"*THEN I'M NOT ONE OF YOU!*" Diddy replied, raising his voice and throwing the gun aside.

Jemky, furious as well as the group, grabbed him by the shirt tightly and pointed the gun at him looking roughly, to which Diddy froze.

"We don't give you the option to be like us, you *have to be like us*," he ordered in a threatening tone before releasing him. "Now do it, or we will shoot him ourselves and then shoot you for *being a coward*."

Diddy, having no escape, with four armed ape children around him, took his gun and pointed it at the little bird... Suddenly, he lunged at him and grabbed him, then jumped and rolled on the ground along with him. He ended up escaping along with the bird away from the four of them.

"*HEY, COME BACK!*" Jemky shouted, and together with the other three, they started shooting aimlessly. Fortunately, Diddy was too agile and was able to hide in time.

Diddy was running at full speed with the little bird and, when he was well away from the four bully kids, he went to a bush, where he left the little bird hidden and sheltered. Then he ran out again, since the group of four was not so far away.

He kept running as fast as he could. He wanted to return to DK Island, but he could no longer run away from his so-called friends, at least not if they were now armed. He climbed a tree to rest for a while and hide. The quartet bully kids stopped when they lost sight of him, but even so, Diddy was close to them to keep an eye on them. Diddy saw a pile of vines tangled on the branches of the trees and didn't have much time to think, so he came up with a plan with the first thing that came to mind.

While the quartet was looking for a trace of Diddy, he climbed down from the tree and picked up a few small stones to more than one large one. He climbed back up to the tree and, with some branches and a piece of vine, set up a quick slingshot, took the stones and threw them at each of the four kids successively, hitting them right in the eyes. The four of them screamed in pain to the point of dropping their weapons to put their hands to their eyes. Then, Diddy took the larger stone and threw it towards the branch that held the vines, causing all of them to fall on the four kids, leaving them buried and with difficulty to get out. Then, he came down from the tree towards them.

"*HEY, STUPID MONKEY!*" Jemky exclaimed as he struggled to untie himself from the vines along with the other three kids.

Diddy, without thinking more, took advantage of the fact that the four kids had left their weapons aside, so he rummaged them and took them all to flee from there with them. He ran aimlessly and not knowing what to do next, until he saw a cliff and headed there. There was a wild tide underneath, so he was determined on what he was going to do, until...

"*STAY STILL, MONKEY!*" appeared the group of the four bully kids, who had reached him. "*Give us back our babies!*" Jemky added, referring to weapons.

The evil group was getting much closer to Diddy, until he took one of the guns in one hand and pointed it at the four of them, stopping them instantly. He just wanted to stop them; he didn't think about actually shooting them.

"*Oh, Diddy,*" Jemky said mockingly and with his hands raised. "*Are you going to kill your only school friends who took you into their group?*"

"Well, I'd rather run out of friends than have ones like *you*," Diddy replied, looking at them seriously.

After a few seconds of keeping the gun pointed and his hand shaking, Diddy took all the weapons again and, mercilessly, threw them into the sea.

"*NOOOOO!*" the four kids exclaimed in horror, heading towards the edge of the cliff, watching their new '*toys*' fall and get lost in the strong waves of the sea.

"*I didn't want thief friends!*" Diddy told them firmly.

Immediately, the four of them looked at Diddy with all the hatred they carried.

"*You're a STUPID INSOLENT!*" Rocky exclaimed furiously.

"Those guns were our best birthday presents!" added Melenky in the same way.

"*And now our dads are going to punish us because of you, gecko monkey!*" Jemky added, about to want to face him. "*This does not stay like this, CATCH THAT IDIOT RIGHT NOW!*"

Immediately, the four threw themselves at Diddy, who tried to flee, but unfortunately, did not reach. Between the four, the bully kids grabbed him by the limbs and tail and began to beat him violently.

"*LET GO OF ME!*" Diddy exclaimed, trying to get out of their midst. "*WAIT FOR... WRINKLY... KNOW THIS, and-*"

Suddenly, they stopped when they heard that. Jemky grabbed Diddy by the shirt with a menacing attitude before warning him.

"No! If Wrinkly or Donkey, or whoever, finds out and comes to face us... we will look for a way to end them and then you, whatever it is; we can get more weapons from our dads! No one makes fun of us! So, beware of saying a word, you cowardly dwarf."

After those words, the four of them held Diddy tightly again and, without having a drop of mercy, they also threw him into the sea. Diddy screamed in despair as he fell into the high tide, where there were wild waves crashing into the rocks. After falling into the water, with the little strength he now had, Diddy tried to get out of there as best he could.

Although it cost me a lot, I managed to get out and reach the shores of the beach. I returned home and Donkey saw me with all the wounds and bruises I had. I wanted to tell him what happened, but I couldn't, I just told him that I had had a heavy fall when I was returning home, and of course... that I had had an excellent afternoon with my "friends".

When we went back to school, I didn't want to see those four bullies, so I didn't even talk to them and tried to ignore them... But they didn't do the same to me. From there, they hate me, and not only that, but they also treat me badly and like to annoy me in different ways. They reproached me that because of me their dads gave them their good reprimand for losing those weapons.

"And that's the story," Diddy concluded, still questioning whether he did the right thing to reveal it to anyone. "Well, I have not seen them with guns anymore since they say that, as a result, their dads restrained them, and that they even gave them a good beating for losing them."

Dixie had been shocked by everything Diddy had told her. After all, she had understood the gravity of the matter.

"They're really evil, they're *evil psychopaths*," Dixie exclaimed, still shocked at what Diddy said; he had already told his new friends many things about him... but never that situation. "Oh, I'm sorry, Diddy, I didn't know you were going through something like that," she said, taking pity on him. "But what about their parents? Don't they say anything to those kids? I mean, don't they realize the bad things they do?"

"I have no idea; I don't know his parents. In fact, they had only told me that they hardly spend much time with them because they work so hard. Wrinkly even said that the one who enrolled them in school was only an orangutan adult," Diddy replied before looking down again. "But since that happened, my school days have been a nightmare. Seriously, I can't stand them. Everything was better without them."

Dixie fell silent, thinking about the whole situation Diddy was going through. For his part, Diddy was in an internal battle between relief and regret of having told that story, which he had kept for some time.

"Oh, Diddy, how terrible," Dixie said, showing concern. "Those kids are evil, they're crazy... Why are they like that?"

"I have no idea either," Diddy replied, shrugging and staring down. "It's like they just have fun doing all these misdeeds."

"Wow, they're completely insane," Dixie said, frowning. "First of all... where did they get the idea of those... strange sweets with millipedes?"

"According to what they told me, they had met a gorilla in the shelter where they had been before; they say that he taught them and then they themselves learned to get them."

"A *shelter*?... Haven't their parents been able to take care of them? And secondly... what kind of parents will they have to have been given... weapons for their birthdays?"

"I don't know that about them. I even asked them a few times what their family was like, even though they didn't seem to want to talk about it. I have no idea what they could be like. They only said that the four of them have always lived together and are like brothers."

"Well... although at least you stopped them, I mean, who knows what more atrocities they could have committed if you hadn't taken their guns," Dixie added before smiling a little. "You were very brave in stopping them, after all."

Diddy looked up again upon hearing what Dixie had said. That cheered him up a little and smiled at her for a second... But then, his smile faded and he was scared again, as if there was nothing else to do for him.

"But don't tell anyone all this, please!" Diddy pleaded anxiously. "Really, don't tell it, seriously."

"Uh... Well, I won't say anything," Dixie replied, looking at him with some strangeness. "But... hey, really, if I were you, I would tell Donkey and..."

"No, no, no, I know Donkey, he will immediately go against them... and I don't want anything to happen to him... Please, *you have to promise me*," Diddy continued to plead desperately before taking a sigh and lowering his gaze. "I even think I shouldn't have told you."

"Uhh, okay... I won't tell anyone, I promise you," Dixie replied, trying to calm him down, though not quite sure what she was saying. "But... I would advise you that if at any time you feel the courage to tell Donkey... do it; you know it's not good to keep those kinds of secrets. Also, those children may threaten you like that just to scare you."

"I know... but I don't feel ready now," Diddy replied with his eyes lowered. "Anyway, one day school will be over and I will never see them again... I just hope that; that is the only thing left for me to do."

There was another moment of silence as Diddy continued to question whether it had been right to have told anyone that, although on the other hand, he also felt some relief in having told the truth for the first time.

For her part, Dixie remained with him and, a few minutes later, smiled again to try to cheer him up.

"Hey, and you don't want to go back to the party?" Dixie suggested after a while. "Or will you stay here longer?"

Diddy thought about it for a while, as he was not in such a good mood. But later, he agreed and accompanied Dixie to walk around the site for a while. At first, there were still moments of silence with Diddy, but little by little he was regaining the mood to at least talk.

"Diddy, and have you tried to defend yourself from those bad kids?" Dixie asked as they walked.

"Yes, but they always win me. They even threatened to accuse me with Wrinkly if I seriously hurt them. Besides, I see them every day at school, it's not like a one-time enemy to be able to flee in case of a big counterattack."

"Hey, but you're really not going to tell Donkey about that?" Dixie asked, looking at him with concern. "That is, he could help you, and who knows, those children would just be expelled from school, and you will never see them again."

"I can't, I'm very afraid to do it... Seriously. I wouldn't want there to be any more problems afterwards," Diddy said, again being somewhat unsure about talking about the situation. "Well, I think we better leave that topic... How about telling me how you learned to turn your hair?"

"Oh, I told you, it's a gift I've had since I was a little child," Dixie replied, stroking her own hair. "Tiny and I were born with this ability."

"Wow, it must be very useful," Diddy said, taking some of Dixie's hair and watching it curiously.

"Too much. My sister and I have saved ourselves from many falls thanks to our hair, besides we can defend ourselves too, at least from enemies of our size."

"Then it's like a gift of birth," Diddy said, smiling in amazement. "And how did you discover it? Or did someone teach you?"

"Well, in fact, our whole family was from a circus in a city that had a huge tower. I was very young at the time and Tiny was barely a baby. In that place, I remember that people made us play a lot and it was where we discovered that we could fly with our hair."

"Really? Were you from a circus?" Diddy asked in amazement. "With shows and stuff?"

"Yes, of course," Dixie replied, nodding and smiling. "Chunky, Tiny and I were born there; our parents were from that place. I only lived there for the first three years of my life."

"Wait! Now that you mention a circus... Do you remember Cranky's story with the circus he was in?" Diddy asked with a look of strangeness. "He didn't say that people there made him play, that rather that place was terrible and they only had him chained. You... weren't in those same situations?"

"No, as far as I can remember. We had a good time there; I loved the functions and much more when we participated. The circus was named *Chimp Cirque*. Until one day... My parents and uncles decided that we should escape from that place because they said we would have a better life outside, although I never quite understood that... They didn't want to talk to us about that when we asked them."

"Wow, how strange," Diddy commented. "And then, you went to live on some island, didn't you?"

"Yes, and that's where we lived for the rest of the years. At first, I missed the circus, but then I got used to living in nature, I even think my parents and uncles had a hard time; sometimes I saw them worried, although they didn't want to tell us why. But anyway, we stayed together often since we all lived together."

"Wow, you were a close-knit family from what I see," Diddy said, smiling.

"Yes... yes, we were," Dixie replied, smiling, though weakly... as if she were also sad at the same time. Then, she also tried to change the topic. "By the way, and how did Cranky escape from that circus he was in?"

"Well... after he stole that plumber's girlfriend in revenge, he was locked up again, and his son, Donkey Junior, came to his rescue..."

Then, they continued walking and talking a little more until later they went to sit near one of the trees of the site. For the first time, Diddy had told his bad situation to someone even if he wasn't sure he had; after all, Dixie had understood and promised not to tell anyone... Still, deep down she thought it would be necessary for Diddy to report that to Wrinkly, since after all, it was a threat and he could be in danger, but anyway, she had decided to understand him... for the time being.

"Do you do this kind of event frequently?" Dixie asked curiously.

"Usually yes," Diddy replied. "Sometimes we do big celebrations and sometimes they are just small meetings where we talk or eat something."

"Wow, you must have a lot of fun," Dixie said, smiling. "You are all very close."

"The truth is that we did have a good time... Well, only Cranky who sometimes opposes when we want to do an event, but then ends up convinced; I've already told you how grumpy he is," Diddy finished with a laugh, being then accompanied by Dixie.

On the other hand, there were Tiny, Kiddy and Chunky together, who seemed to be playing hide and seek. Even if Chunky was older, he occasionally played with his young relatives.

"I count and you hide," Chunky told them.

Later, Tiny and Kiddy went to hide in some bushes. But Tiny, from the hiding place, managed to observe something that seemed to catch her attention and put her imagination to fly... It was Diddy and Dixie chatting and even laughing together. Chunky then found Tiny and Kiddy, causing them a scare.

"Uhu! Here you are..."

"Silence!" Tiny interrupted quietly.

"What happened... Oh, I see, are we spying?" Chunky asked quietly, also behind the bushes along with Kiddy and Tiny. "What are we supposed to spy on?"

"Just look," Tiny said, pointing to Diddy and Dixie in the distance. "Don't you see them... *adorable*?" she added with a little laugh.

"Adorable? What do you mean?" Chunky asked with a strange look, though then he opened his eyes as wide as he could. "Ohh, I see," he exclaimed in a playful tone as if he had caught the reference.

"My sister seems to be doing very well here," Tiny said, smiling in the same way and shrugging.

"Will it be?" Chunky said, watching strangely and crossing his arms. "Chunky doesn't believe it much; Dixie has said that such things will never happen to her."

"Hey, everybody! The party is about to begin!" Funky announced suddenly.

After so many preparations, all the kongs gathered to start the party. There were many games that Swanky organized, since he liked them very much, and in which all the kongs participated and had a lot of fun, even Diddy, who had already cheered up little by little. Everyone won prizes, except for Cranky, as he became too frustrated or lost patience in the middle of games.

"In my time nobody played these silly games!" growled Cranky after competing against Donkey in a game of target shooting with balls, and losing the game.

"If you think they're silly, what are you playing for?" Donkey replied, earning a few laughs from the rest.

"You little insolent!" Cranky replied, annoyed.

"Stop your fights, friends, how about we dance now?" Swanky suggested cheerfully.

"Yeah!" the others replied with emotion.

Later, they turned on the music and started dancing the rest of the party until they got tired. No doubt, the Kong family liked to have fun to the fullest. While the music was on, they made more games or dynamics in the middle of the dances.

It had been an excellent welcome for Dixie, Tiny, Chunky and Kiddy. During the event, they danced, played and enjoyed delicious sweets and exquisite food to the latest. The four of them looked very happy and were grateful to the Kong family for receiving them well. For their part, the other Kongs were also happy to get to know them more and share moments with them.

After midnight, the event ended. Everyone was already getting ready to go home.

"That was great!" Chunky exclaimed cheerfully. "Chunky is very happy. You guys are amazing!"

"Yes, we haven't had these parties in a long time," Tiny added in the same tone. "You are the best!"

"We're glad you liked it," Donkey replied, smiling. "You guys are great too."

"Yes, this has been phenomenal," Funky added with emotion. "It has been a pleasure to have you present, little friends."

"Hey... Thank you all, seriously," Dixie added, smiling kindly. "You have done so much for us and we are extremely grateful. I don't know how we could pay you."

"Oh, don't worry, we're just here to help," Donkey replied likewise. "And you know, you can count on us for whatever. The doors are open."

"Friends, I was thinking if next week we could spend the day at the beach, what do you think?" Funky suggested. "We will stay all day, and in the evening, we will eat a special dinner."

"We think it's a great idea!" answered the other kongs in a similar way.

Subsequently, they all began to leave for their respective houses. They were happy to have welcomed their new friends. Dixie, Tiny, Kiddy and Chunky, meanwhile, entered their new house... but before, Dixie said goodbye in the distance to Diddy when he was already leaving with Donkey; he gave her a strange look at first, but then returned her the same gesture with a smile.

A/N: The fact that Dixie belonged to a circus before, I took it from a fragment of a game magazine, and where there was an interview with Dixie. Obviously, I just took it for inspiration, and then adapted it with my ideas. It was this:



We come to the end of this chapter. And well, I warned at the beginning that this story could have somewhat crazy contexts... like that of those four bully kids. By the way, Z Island where they live is fictional, it has no importance in the story.

Chapter 6: Day at the Beach

As it had been planned a week ago, the Kong family gathered at the beach to spend a fun day there. Some of them bathed in the sea, others learned to surf with Funky, others enjoyed some refreshing drinks, while others played in the sand.

Diddy was at sea playing with his four new friends. They used to hang out more with Diddy, since he was more contemporary with them and they understood each other better when it came to games. Sometimes they would have competitions to see who could swim the fastest to the shore or who could reach the deepest part of the water.

"Hurry up, Diddy!" Tiny exclaimed as they ran towards the beach shore in a competition.

The five finished their round of races and began to decide who had come in first place. Later, Chunky and Kiddy went to Funky's to surf and, meanwhile, Diddy, Dixie and Tiny started building castles in the sand.

"Hey, what if we see who of the three of us builds the best sand castle the fastest?" Tiny suggested excitedly.

"Okay. I'll win you," Diddy responded with a defiant tone.

"We'll see about that," Dixie added in the same tone.

The three of them began to build their sand castles as fast as they could. Dixie was about to finish her castle and, to give it the finishing touch, she was going to place a small flag on top. But when she was about to take it, Diddy took it first to put it in his castle.

"Hey! That flag is mine, *I saw it first*," Dixie claimed.

"Oh, too bad, but *I took it first*," Diddy said mockingly.

"Give it to me!"

They both began to compete for the flag and tried to take it from each other. But during the move, Diddy collapsed a part of Dixie's castle with his foot by accident.

"Hey! My castle!" Dixie exclaimed, annoyed.

Immediately, and as revenge, Dixie also purposely brought down Diddy's castle.

"Hey, that's not fair! It was an accident!" Diddy protested.

They both began to argue, in a friendly manner and with laughter involved, of course. In the middle of it, Tiny began to observe the two of them, and she seemed to have a curious idea in her mind... She even adopted a suspicious look.

"Hey, Diddy," Tiny told him, making them calm down. "By any chance... have you ever had a girlfriend?"

"What?" Diddy responded with a strange look. "No, I don't even think about it."

“And you, Dixie, have you had a boyfriend?” Tiny asked again with a few small laughs.

“Are you crazy? Don't you know me?” Dixie responded, looking at her strangely.

“Oh, I was just asking,” Tiny said, laughing. “Well, my castle didn't collapse, so I won. See you later!”

Without further ado, Tiny ran off to the others, purposely leaving Diddy and Dixie alone. They both didn't understand anything and were confused by those random questions.

“I think she's a little crazy,” Dixie said with a shrug and a little laugh, before looking back at Diddy with a ‘thirst for revenge’. “Well, what were we up to? Oh yes, you brought down my castle!”

“I already told you it was an accident! Besides, I saw the flag first,” Diddy told him in a mocking tone.

In the middle of the “fight,” Dixie suddenly took off Diddy's cap.

“Hey, give me my cap!”

“Go get it, cheater!” Dixie said as she ran off with the cap, before Diddy went after her. They were both running so fast until Diddy managed to catch up with her and, in revenge, he also took off her beret. “Hey! That's not fair, give it back to me!”

“If you give me my cap, I'll give you yours back,” Diddy said, twirling Dixie's beret in his hand.

“Well, you'll have to catch it!” Dixie replied.

Then, both kongs continued playing and chasing each other until they entered the jungle and climbed the trees, jumping one by one, and using vines for a better escape. Later, Diddy ran towards the tip of a tree branch and Dixie consequently went after him. The tree was tall and there were no longer any vines to hold on to.

“Ha! You won't be able to escape anymore,” Dixie told him in a malicious tone and was about to reach him.

Dixie, seeing that Diddy would no longer have an escape, rushed towards him to catch him, but unfortunately, she pushed him very hard, causing him to fall to the ground abruptly.

“Diddy!” Dixie exclaimed, looking instantly scared.

Dixie came down from the tree immediately. She headed towards Diddy and, when she reached him, she took him in her hands to revive him.

“Oh, no! Are you okay, Diddy? Tell me something!”

“Yes... I'm fine, my head just hurts a little,” Diddy said, getting up in pain.

Suddenly, Dixie realized that Diddy had a small wound on his head from the fall.

“Oh, no. I'm so sorry, Diddy, I didn't mean to,” Dixie apologized desperately.

“Don't worry, I'm somewhat used to getting hurt,” Diddy replied with a small smile.

"You've got hurt a lot," she said, helping him up. "Come, I'll give you something to heal you. Let's go to my house for a while."

Diddy was still rubbing the wound on his head and he did feel sore, but he agreed to accompany Dixie anyway. They both headed to her house, which was not that far from there.

Upon arrival, Dixie put a bandage on Diddy, who, by the way, still had the one on his eye, a product of the beatings of his bad classmates at school; poor Diddy looked like he came out of a hospital. Finally, Dixie placed his cap on him.

"That's all, you'll get better," Dixie said, smiling at him, but then she felt very guilty about what had happened. "And I'm sorry, it was my fault, I didn't mean to-"

"Don't worry," Diddy interrupted between small laughs. "It was an accident, those fool kids at school that I told you about have hit me harder."

"Well, if you say so," Dixie replied, smiling. "Uh, why don't we go back to the beach?"

Meanwhile, on the beach, Funky was giving Donkey and Candy a stroll in the sea. Funky drove a boat at full speed, while the other two held on to ropes and stood on water ski boards tied to the boat.

"Wow! This is fun!" Donkey shouted while he felt all the wind hitting his face.

"Too much!" Candy responded in the same way. *"The view from here is great!"*

"I told you it was going to be great!" Funky added from the seat of the boat.

"Hey, have you seen Diddy?!" Donkey said as he watched the beach in the distance. "I haven't seen him anywhere!"

"I don't know, brother, I think I saw him for..."

"Oh, there he is!" Donkey interrupted as he watched Diddy emerge from the jungle along with Dixie.

"Hey... and it seems that the little one is not in bad company, huh!" Funky said with a smile and a raised look.

"What are you talking about?" Donkey said with a strange look, before smiling when he got the idea. "Hey, what are you saying, brother? I don't believe that."

"I don't think so either, they're still young," Candy added with small laughs. "Although who knows-"

Suddenly, the boat had an inclination that caught them by surprise and caused them a little scare.

"Geez, I think we should go back!" Funky exclaimed. "The tide doesn't look so friendly. Hold on!"

Then, Funky made a turn on the boat, causing it to change direction so he could return to the beach. Some wobbles had appeared in the boat, which was preventing them from staying out to sea.

Upon reaching the beach, they reunited with the other Kongs, including Diddy and Dixie, who had already rejoined as well.

"The tide is a little strong, friends," Funky told them as he disembarked his boat. "Be careful if you go in."

The kongs stayed on the shores of the beach for a long time, while they drank some refreshments. Later, they dispersed again into small groups, where Diddy was again with Dixie and Tiny inspecting Funky's inventions.

"Wow, you guys must have a lot of fun," Tiny commented as they saw one of Funky's boats.

"What if we'll go for a ride on this boat?" Diddy told them with emotion. "Funky said we could take it."

"And can you drive one of these?" Dixie asked him.

"I've been learning something," Diddy responded with a little laugh. "So, what do you say?"

Dixie and Tiny boarded the planned boat with Diddy, the latter being the one who would take the helm. Then, Diddy started the engine and began to accelerate slowly until he headed towards the waves. Funky had taught him a few lessons, so he wasn't afraid to drive this time.

"Hold on!" Diddy said to the two kong girls.

Diddy began to accelerate until they reached sea, where he could navigate more easily. He was going at a high speed, which caused the wind to hit their faces.

"*This is great!*" exclaimed Tiny, showing excitement along with Dixie while they were holding the boat.

"*Too much!*" Dixie added in the same way.

"*Now it will get better!*" Diddy exclaimed before turning the wheel.

Then, Diddy steered the boat toward a path with rock formations, where it began to move from one side to the other. The three kongs were cheerful as they felt all the wind rushing as they accelerated.

"*What did you think?!*" Diddy asked them as he accelerated.

"*Fun!*" Dixie exclaimed with excitement.

"*Now let's go this way!*" Diddy exclaimed before turning the wheel again.

Diddy headed down another path where he could even feel that the boat was rocking up and down, which added to the fun for the little kongs. Although suddenly... he also realized that there were small waves forming and starting to hit the boat.

"*Hold on! I'm going-*"

Suddenly, a wave that had been forming hit the boat with some force, even soaking the three of them.

“Hey, I think it's bad here!” Dixie exclaimed, holding on again. “Maybe we should go now-”

Dixie couldn't finish her sentence, as another wave passed over them and even caused them to lose some of their balance.

“You're right!” Diddy exclaimed, beginning to despair. “We should better-”

A few seconds later, another much stronger wave hit the boat hard, this time making it capsize and expelling the three of them from it.

“Diddy!”

Suddenly, Diddy, Dixie and Tiny were being dragged by waves and submerged at every turn. The three of them were fighting to stay on the surface, but they were having a hard time. Diddy especially was afraid for his safety, as well as for Dixie and Tiny, and he was regretting having gone out like that on the boat.

“Here!” Diddy told them, trying to hold Dixie and Tiny to stay together. *“Don't be afraid-”*

But the waves were so continuous that they couldn't stay balanced and just kept submerging them again and again.

And suddenly, Diddy felt a large hand grab his arm and pull him out, followed by Dixie and Tiny, who had also been taken by their arms out of the water.

“We already have you, little friends!”

Turning to look immediately, they realized that it was Donkey, Funky and Chunky who had arrived in a larger closed boat and had taken the three of them with them.

“Carefully!” Funky exclaimed as they closed the windows of the boat and, at the same time, they were reaching the boat where the three little kongs were, with the help of some anchors.

Then, Funky accelerated the big boat and they started heading towards the beach again. Meanwhile, Diddy, Dixie, and Tiny were breathing heavily from all the hustle and bustle the waves had caused them.

“Are you okay?” Donkey asked them with concern.

“Yes... it seems so,” Dixie replied, recovering. “Thank you for coming for us.”

“You saved us! Thank you!” Tiny exclaimed in the same way.

“Chunky could see that you were out to sea,” Chunky added. “And then he went to call the others to save them. What a scare you gave us.”

“What happened, little friends?” Funky also told them, looking worried. “The sea is now somewhat dangerous; I recommend not going out like that.”

“I'm sorry, I didn't think it was that much,” Diddy replied, feeling a little guilty. “Seriously, excuse me.”

"No, don't worry, you're safe now," Funky told them, calming them down. "But please, don't be around here. In these times, I think it is dangerous to be out to sea. It must be the effects of the northern hurricanes."

"Hurricanes?" Tiny asked curiously.

"Yes, there are some towards the North at this time, friends," Funky told them. "But no, it's not to be feared, they don't reach this island. Only the tide will have effects, nothing more."

Minutes later, Funky arrived with the boat and the other kongs on board to the shores of the beach, and then everyone went down towards the sand. The rest of the kongs approached them, especially toward the little kongs, and began to ask about their well-being and show concern for them.

"Holy heavens, little kids!" Wrinkly exclaimed, coming to see Diddy, Dixie and Tiny. "You gave us a big scare."

"Don't worry, Mrs. Wrinkly, we're fine," Dixie replied, smiling at her, before speaking to the others. "Fortunately, we are fine."

"That's very good," Candy added in the same way. "You must be very careful. We recently went with Donkey; the tide was very aggressive."

"But hey, the important thing is that it didn't get any worse," Donkey finished, smiling with relief.

The Kong family continued to comment on the sudden event that had just occurred, although this time they were already happy that nothing serious had happened. Everyone later continued their normal activities.

"Well, friends, why don't we go eat something at my house?" Funky suggested later. "It's getting late."

The rest of the kongs nodded, and then they started heading towards Funky's house. Everyone was in the front, except for Diddy and Dixie, who had stayed talking for a while and realized at the last moment that everyone was walking.

"Hey, but I'm really... sorry," Diddy said to Dixie as they walked. "Sorry if I put you through that scare."

"What are you saying? There's no problem now," Dixie replied, smiling and patting him on the shoulder. "Also, it's not the first time we have had an accident like this offshore, believe me."

"Oh, really?"

"Yeah, and besides... it was fun at least before that happened," Dixie added, before continuing walking. "By the way, Diddy, didn't you hurt your eye and head injuries?"

"No, luckily not," Diddy answered, running his hand over both bandaged wounds he had. "When I get home, I'll just have to change my bandages."

"Okay, just try not to touch your wounds so hard," Dixie told him, smiling at him. Then, they continued walking together. "You know, Diddy? These days have been great for the four of us, and... all thanks to you. Seriously, I see that you are a big friendly and kind family of kongs. And that has brightened our days since we arrived here."

"Wow, that sounds great," Diddy replied, smiling at him. "We're also glad that you are better."

Dixie smiled again, which also made Diddy quite happy and he smiled back. Then, they continued on their way until they met the rest of the kongs in the pack.

For the rest of the day, the Kong family, including the four new ones, stayed to eat and hang out at Funky's house. It had been a nice day after all.

"NO! DON'T DARE!" Diddy shouted in a terrified way. *"IT ISN'T TRUE! I HAVE NOT TOLD THEM ANYTHING!"*

"SHUT UP, MONKEY!"

Diddy was with his limbs wrapped in vines and attached to tree branches. He was all tense and shaking non-stop as he was in front of the quartet of his bully classmates. These four kids were carrying guns this time, which caused Diddy a deep panic, not only because of that, but also because in addition to having him trapped like that, they had Donkey and Wrinkly in front of them in the same way.

"NO, NO, LEAVE THEM!" Diddy begged them, trying to shake his limbs.

"Little buddy, why didn't you tell me this before?!" Donkey exclaimed from a distance, although he seemed quite calm for what he should be in a situation like that.

"Oh, Diddy, what trouble have you gotten yourself into?!" Wrinkly added in the same way.

"NO, DONKEY! WRINKLY!" Diddy shouted. *"DON'T SAY I TOLD YOU THAT!"*

"Well, what a shame, little monkey," Jemky said, pointing the gun at him. *"You knew well what awaited you if you reported us, now abstain from the consequences!"*

"NO, DON'T DO IT!"

"SILENCE!" Rocky replied, hitting him with the gun before heading towards the others. *"Now! Open fire!"*

"NOOO, NOOO!"

As soon as they said it, the quartet proceeded to point their weapons at Donkey and Wrinkly. Immediately, Diddy turned his head away while he closed his eyes tightly... A few seconds later, he could hear a couple of gunshots.

"Now to the monkey!" Jemky ordered.

"NO, NO, NO, YOU STUPIDS!"

Diddy partially opened his eyes and could now see the quartet aiming at him, who instantly, they started shooting at him...

"Diddy!" what seemed to be Donkey's voice was heard in a distorted way.

Diddy, at the moment of being hit, felt a strong beat on his face that made him open his eyes completely... What he saw now was nothing more than the floor of his room again.

"Diddy, what's wrong with you?!" Donkey asked him, who hurriedly picked him up from the floor and examined him.

"Donkey!" Diddy exclaimed, immediately launching himself towards him and hugging him tightly.

"Oh, all right, all right, little buddy," Donkey said, patting him on the back. "What happened? Have you had a bad dream or something?"

"Donkey..." Diddy said, separating himself from him while breathing heavily, and he even had a few small tears about to come out of his eyes.

"Oh, no, calm down, little buddy... Can you tell me what happened?"

"No, no... It's nothing serious, Donkey," Diddy replied, coming to his senses and returning to sit on his bed. "It's just... I had a nightmare... about the Kremplings... and they... held us hostage and then... they shot you!"

"What?!" Donkey exclaimed, looking at him strangely before approaching him to calm him down. "Oh, no, Diddy, but what are you saying? There are no kremplings nearby, they haven't come this way. Everything's fine. It was just a bad dream, little buddy; I'm fine."

"No, but..." Diddy felt at that moment an impulse to want to tell Donkey the truth, but like so many times, he couldn't. "Uh, no, I mean... y-you're right, it was just a bad dream."

Donkey stayed to accompany him for a while, while his nephew continued to show fear; he didn't like seeing him like that, so he stayed with him until he felt better.

"Diddy, could you explain to me better what it was you dreamed about?" Donkey asked him after a while.

Diddy, still shaking from fear, tried to think quickly so he could give a fake version of his nightmare to Donkey, like he always did.

"W-well... what happened in my dream was that there were you and me... S-some kremplings had kidnapped us and... they were carrying their weapons and then... they shot you and then me... and that's when I woke up," Diddy concluded, changing something to the story and without also mentioning Wrinkly to further lower suspicions.

"Okay, little buddy, how about you think about that whole dream again?" Donkey suggested, which earned a strange look from Diddy. "I mean... replay that dream in your mind, but this time... imagine that I manage to untie myself in time and that then those kremplings try to shoot us but their weapons are empty, and then I free you and there we give them what they deserve to all those idiots and return them to their island, what do you think?... Just try to change history."

Diddy was silent for a while as he processed what Donkey had told him... Although he couldn't really change things from how they were with his classmates, at least changing the meaning of things in his nightmare would calm him down for now.

"Do that and then try to think of at least ten things that make you happy, little buddy," Donkey added, patting him on the head and smiling at him. "And then try to sleep again, okay?"

"Okay, Donkey," Diddy replied, smiling a little before staying silent for a while and going back to bed.

"Hey, and by the way, Diddy," Donkey said, looking at his head strangely. "What has happened to you? Why do you have a bandage on your head?"

"Oh, this," Diddy replied, looking up into his head. "I was just playing with Dixie this afternoon and we went into the jungle to climb some trees, but I fell. That was true... I mean, just like the thing about my eye," he added with a forced smile. "And then, she took me to her house and tried to help my wound."

"Woah, you must have been hurt a lot," Donkey added, examining the bandage a little. "But doesn't it hurt you?"

"Well, just normal," Diddy replied. "I don't think it turned out to be that serious, but I'll still have to leave the bandage on for a few days."

"Okay, let me know if it gets complicated, little buddy," Donkey said, patting him on the shoulder, before getting up and smiling. "Still, it was a nice Dixie's gesture to help you... *Playing with Dixie*," he added quietly, before looking up. "You have become very good friends from what I see... Okay, little buddy, keep resting, and you know, try to think of a different story than what you dreamed of and then think of several things that make you happy."

Donkey said goodbye to Diddy, and then left the room, while Diddy just tried to calm down and follow the suggestions Donkey had given him. He managed to calm down for a moment, but anyway, he kept thinking that something like that is what could happen if he reported his evil classmates... Thoughts that always tormented him.

Chapter 7: New Student

A new week was beginning. Diddy was heading to school and, as always, his bully classmates would be waiting to bother him. But this time, Diddy stayed hidden among the tree branches, watching the quartet quite stealthily until Wrinkly arrived. He didn't feel like putting up with those four bully kids, not if that image of them threatening him in his nightmares overwhelmed him.

When Diddy saw Wrinkly arriving at school, he came down from the trees and went outside. He knew that the quartet kids would see him pass anyway, but at least he was certain that Wrinkly's presence would not give them a chance to bother him.

"Look, the cowardly vermin monkey has arrived!" said Mandrew, and the rest of the group laughed. But Diddy ignored them and continued walking at fast paces.

"Oh, he's afraid of us," Jemky added in a mocking tone. "Poor little dumb monke-"

"Silence! It's Wrinkly!" Rocky quietly interrupted the group.

"Good morning, children," Wrinkly appeared a while later, calming the situation.

"Oh, good morning, Mrs. Wrinkly," the entire quartet responded with forced smiles.

As if nothing had happened, Wrinkly invited her students to head towards the classroom. Diddy went with them, at the same time that he looked askance at the quartet of bullies and they made mocking gestures at each other.

"You're saved, dwarf," Jemky murmured to Diddy.

Then, everyone entered the classroom and went to sit at their respective positions to begin. For her part, Wrinkly went to her desk, but before starting class, she stood in front of the entire classroom; apparently, she had an important announcement that she wanted to make.

"Children! Before we start class, I have to tell you something," Wrinkly announced to the class, drawing their attention. "It's a novelty."

The students were curious about these words from their teacher, and began to ask and murmur what it was about.

"No homework?"

"Vacation?"

"New lockers?"

"No!" Wrinkly responded firmly before making the official announcement. "It's... new student!"

"New student?!" they all exclaimed in succession, appearing astonished.

Wrinkly nodded, earning some strange and curious looks from her students. At that moment, everyone began to assume who it was and what it would be like, since they had not had new classmates for a long time, and the cycle had already been going on for a few weeks.

Suddenly, someone knocked on the door and Wrinkly went to open it. She greeted whoever was outside, before calling to come in.

"Well, you can come in, dear girl!" Wrinkly said as someone was about to enter the door.

"Dear girl? It's a... girl?" Melenky whispered in the middle of the class, confusing the rest.

Suddenly, that *someone* opened the door wider and approached to enter the classroom. Everyone turned to see who she was.

"W-what?!" Diddy said in a low voice and was shocked to see that it was nothing more and nothing less than... *Dixie!*

Indeed, it was the same Dixie; she had decided to also study at Kong Kollege. The other students looked at her strangely as she walked around the room.

"Welcome to class, Dixie. They will be your classmates," Wrinkly told her kindly. "I hope you all get along very well and become good friends. The students here are very friendly, right, kids?"

The students responded affirmatively, although they continued to look somewhat strangely at Dixie, especially the quartet of bully children.

"Okay, students, she is Dixie and she came to live on this island about a month and a half ago," Wrinkly added, returning to the front of the classroom. "Now each of you say your names so she knows you, please."

The students proceeded to give their names one by one, and after that, class continued as normal. As expected, Dixie walked toward Diddy and chose to sit in a booth next to him, greeting him with a smile when she arrived. For his part, he returned the greeting in the same way... although deep down it was not something that excited him at first as it would expect.

The other students only seemed to wonder about Dixie. The group of four bully children kept looking at her strangely. Diddy, on the other hand, was still shocked; he never imagined that Dixie would join the class, and he was even starting to worry because he feared that that quartet bullies would also hurt her... It was the first thing he thought about when he saw her arrive.

Later, it was break and everyone went out to the yard. During that period of time, Diddy could rest easy, since Wrinkly was always present, so it was not a good time for his four bad classmates to bother him.

However, this time, Diddy wasn't calm about seeing Dixie there. He went to talk to her, since he wanted to give her the warnings about enrolling in Kong Kollege, and it was no small matter how worried he was now.

"Dixie!... W-what are you doing here?!" Diddy told her in a low voice, looking somewhat worried.

"What? I wanted to come to class too," Dixie responded, smiling and not paying attention to Diddy's reaction.

"No, no, it's a serious mistake coming now. I mean... Did you forget what I told you about those four bad kids? They could hurt you too!"

"Oh, come on! They don't look that dangerous, they're our age, just look at them," Dixie pointed towards the group of four kids, who were in another corner. "Besides... they don't have weapons now like you told me."

"Yes, but they're hateful, they like bothering me and hitting me all the time," Diddy replied. "They could do the same to you!"

"Well, they're our size, I don't think there's a problem," Dixie commented with a shrug. "I thought they would look stronger to face them."

"But you don't understand," Diddy added, still alarmed, "they are completely set out to annoy."

While Diddy and Dixie argued, on the other hand was the quartet of bullies, who also gathered as a group to talk to each other. The four of them looked at Dixie strangely at first, especially seeing that she was with Diddy.

"Hey, what's that new girl like?" Rocky asked, pointing surreptitiously at her.

"I thought there weren't going to be any new students," Melenky said with a strange look. "And she just got together with that dumb monkey Diddy."

"I don't know, I think she's just like that lizard monkey," Mandrew responded, shrugging his shoulders and crossing his arms. "She must also be a coward and weakling like him. Just look, she's a... little girl; she must be even weaker than that dumb monkey."

"And look! Apparently, they are *friends*," Melenky commented, before smiling mockingly. "Looks like we might now have two silly little monkeys to bother, what do you say?"

"I do, to be honest," Mandrew replied, smiling somewhat maliciously. "I feel like it must be fun in that case: two weak little monkeys."

"Well... I don't know about you, but... I think she's very *pretty*," Jemky added, looking at her, instead, in a smiling way.

"Oh, are you serious, Jemky?" exclaimed Melenky, looking at him strangely. "Why are you always interested in girls?"

"What? I'm just saying what she is," Jemky responded, shrugging his shoulders and still smiling as he continued looking at her. "Wow... she's so beautiful, really."

"Anyways, none of the girls here pay attention to you," Melenky added, rolling his eyes.

"Hey, and how about we go to those two and talk to them?" Rocky suggested to the other three.

Diddy and Dixie, for their part, continued talking about the topic. When suddenly, they saw that the quartet of bully children had them in their sights and seemed to be heading towards them. As they approached, Diddy looked fearful while Dixie just looked at them strangely at their approach.

"Hey, hello, little monkeys. Sorry if we interrupted," Jemky said formally before speaking to Dixie. "What was your name, new girl?"

"Uh, Dixie," she responded without taking them a strange look away.

"Oh, *Dixie*? What a... pathetic name," Mandrew mocked, unable to resist teasing her, and then Rocky and Melenky began to laugh a little.

"Mandrew!" Jemky whispered, nudging him. "Don't start with the antics yet."

"Hey, what's wrong with you?!" Dixie responded to Mandrew offended. "Have a little more manner!"

"But your name is pathetic... like you," Melenky added in a mocking tone.

"Melenky!" Jemky whispered again, apparently trying to calm them down.

"And look at her ugly hair," Mandrew added, pulling hard on one of Dixie's curly locks. "They are from silly girls."

Diddy could see that the quartet was starting to get annoying, and he couldn't let them do the same with Dixie.

"No!" Diddy interfered, getting in front of Dixie. "I won't let you hurt her too!"

"Wow, wow, and if we hurt your little friend, do you think you can defend her?" Mandrew told him in a sarcastic tone. "Wimpy lizard!"

"Hey, don't call Diddy that way!" Dixie replied firmly as she saw the tension building.

"Oh, so you are a very strong headed girl!" Rocky responded, looking up.

"It looks like you're just like Diddy," Melenky added before laughing. "Just as stupid!"

"I'll tell Mrs. Wrinkly and-" Dixie stressed to them, but Diddy nudged her lightly so she wouldn't continue.

"Did you say *Wrinkly*?" Rocky exclaimed with a warning look. "By the way, Diddy, have you already told her what's going to happen if you report us with Wrinkly?"

"Yes, I know!" Diddy responded angrily. "So, don't you dare do some of your dirty tricks to Dixie!"

The four of them looked at Diddy in a mocking manner and as if they wanted to laugh at him, while he was in a firm position to defend Dixie if necessary.

"Well, be *thankful* that Wrinkly is watching break time right now," Rocky told him, shrugging his shoulders and pointing his eyes at Wrinkly. "See you, little monkeys."

With that, the four of them laughed among themselves again and left. As they walked away, they could be heard murmuring about the two... except for Jemky, who just glanced at Dixie from a distance and smiled at her. For her part, Dixie just looked at them strangely.

"How unpleasant those children are," Dixie commented with disgust.

"Yes, and we should really be *grateful that Wrinkly is watching*," Diddy added somewhat ironically. "Anyway, I guess we have to be very careful with those four."

"Hey, but seriously... Those four kids don't seem that difficult to deal with if they go too far."

"Yes, if it weren't for the fact that if they don't mess with you, they'll mess with your things, your homework, and your lunch," Diddy answered, rolling his eyes a little.

"And what are the other children like? I mean... they don't know anything about those four?"

"Those kids are also unfriendly; just talk to them and they will look at you like a weirdo. And no, I think they don't know anything about the things those four bullies do, in fact, they four were also treated like weirdos when they arrived at this school... I regret not having done the same and having listened to them."

"Jeez, it's not a fun classroom then," Dixie commented with a shrug. "When I went to school, I always had good classmates, of course, some were hateful, but generally I had good friends."

"Have you been to a school too?"

"Of course. Until two years ago I went, and last year I couldn't because... well, several things happened."

"Diddy! Dixie! How are you?" Wrinkly appeared behind them. "How did it go, Dixie? Did you like school?"

"Oh, of course, Mrs. Wrinkly," Dixie replied, smiling. "It's all good so far."

"That's good, I'm glad, little one," Wrinkly replied in a sweet tone. "I hope you can continue like this. And well... I came to talk to you too, Diddy, it's so I can review your homework from last week."

"Oh, yes, I was forgetting," Diddy replied, putting his hand to his head. "Okay, let's go right now. Wait a while, Dixie," he told her before quickly leaving.

"If you want, you can go have your lunch in the area over there, Dixie," Wrinkly told her kindly.

"Okay, Mrs. Wrinkly," Dixie responded in the same way.

Wrinkly also left the conversation and headed towards the classroom along with Diddy, since he had a pending assignment to present... which he had done at the time, but his bad classmates ruined it for him and, as he always did, Diddy had made an excuse so he could present it later.

For her part, Dixie went to sit on some wooden seats, which were set up for having lunch. She was carrying a bag in which she brought some fruits to eat and, after getting comfortable with it, she began to enjoy her lunch while she waited for Diddy to return.

Suddenly, Dixie heard someone nearby and, turning to look, she realized that it was Jemky, the orangutan boy, who was apparently walking towards her and smiling at her. Dixie just looked at him strangely as soon as she saw him.

"Hey! How are you, new girl?" Jemky said greeting her. "Dixie, right?"

"Uh... yes?" she answered Dixie, still looking at him strangely.

"Why are you looking at me like that? I just wanted to ask you," he told her with a little laugh, before speaking to her normally. "Oh, and right, I wanted to apologize for what happened recently

and the stupid comments of my friends... They sometimes don't measure their words; don't pay attention to them."

"Yes, I realized that," Dixie replied, looking up.

"So, you're new here, right?" he asked her with a smile and a fixed look. "Do you come from another island too?"

"Well, yes... You too?" Dixie asked him without removing her serious look.

"That's right, although we don't live here... And then, you're Diddy's friend, right?"

"Uh, yes, of course. Don't you?"

"We were, but... things happened and we have grown apart... And have you been his friend for a long time or did you just meet him?"

"I've known him for a while," she replied, still looking at him suspiciously.

"Oh, so, you're good friends," Jemky commented, smiling and looking up. Suddenly, he started staring at Dixie in a fixed way, which seemed much weirder to her. "Your eyes are pretty," he told her, smiling at her and still looking at her.

"Uh... thanks? I guess," Dixie replied with a forced smile, before becoming serious again.

"They are almost the same color as mine," he added, blinking his greenish eyes. Then, he gave her a strange look. "Hey, you're kind of serious... I liked you," he finished, smiling at her again before taking a few steps back. "See you, Dixie."

Jemky then began to walk away and retreated. Suddenly, Diddy also appeared on the way, who had a strange look on Jemky after having caught him talking to Dixie. As they crossed the path, Jemky gave Diddy a sideways glance, before giving him a small pat on the head and continuing walking as he smiled.

Diddy immediately headed towards Dixie, as it was obvious that he felt slight tension after seeing that one of the bully kids had been interacting with her.

"What did that kid tell you?" Diddy asked her in a low voice.

"He was asking about myself, about you, and about my eyes," Dixie responded with a shrug.

Later, break ended and everyone returned to the classroom. Class continued as normal, except for Diddy, who was only worried about Dixie and still thinking that it had been a terrible idea that she went to that school. Meanwhile, the quartet of bully children looked at them both out of the corner of their eyes and laughed quietly. Dixie, for her part, also gave them a strange look at those four children.

A couple of hours later, class ended and everyone began to leave.

"See you tomorrow, my children, take care of yourselves," Wrinkly said goodbye, smiling at them as each one left. The last ones to leave were Diddy and Dixie. "Oh, and Dixie, I hope you liked your first day of school."

"Thank you, Mrs. Wrinkly," Dixie replied, smiling. "Of course."

Wrinkly left completely, now leaving his students unsupervised, so Diddy had to keep an eye on his bad classmates, and he knew that he would have to protect Dixie no matter what... even though he himself couldn't defend himself well against them. They both started walking outside.

"Listen to this, Dixie," Diddy whispered as he glanced at the four of them, who were walking a little ahead of the two of them. "We'll go through those trees over there. Don't make any noise and don't say anything either, okay?"

Diddy pointed in a direction that apparently seemed to be a shortcut so the four bullies wouldn't catch them. Dixie just followed where Diddy was pointing. They were going to hide behind some bushes that were bigger than them and were somewhat narrow, so Diddy went in first so he could confirm to Dixie if it was safe. Until...

"Where are you going, dwarf?!" Jemky exclaimed, grabbing him by surprise and taking him to the other side of the bush.

"Nice try, dumb monkey!" Mandrew said, taking him too and smashing him on the ground.

The four had appeared and began attacking Diddy again, while he tried to hit them back without any success.

"Hey! Leave him!" Dixie appeared crossing the bush and grabbing Diddy.

The four of them stopped in their tracks when they saw Dixie arrive. She stood in front of Diddy while he was just all nervous about what might happen after seeing her in front of them. Suddenly, the quartet just started laughing out loud at Dixie's presence, and they looked at her in a mocking way.

"Wow, how scary, a girl!" Mandrew commented in a sarcastic tone.

"Come on, *let's go, let's go*," Diddy whispered to Dixie, taking her by the arm and then starting to escape.

"Hey, where are you going?!" exclaimed the four, stopping them.

"*NO! Don't mess with Dixie!*" Diddy exclaimed, trying to protect her and looking at them with all seriousness.

"Not with your friend, but with you," Jemky responded with a mocking look, before taking him by the shirt again.

"No, her too!" exclaimed the other three kids, taking Dixie.

"No, not with her!" Jemky replied, stopping them for some reason. "It's with the monkey!"

"But she comes with the monkey!" Mandrew replied. "Or what? Are you defending her too?"

"Huh, you defend her because she is a girl, I know that!" Melenky added in a mocking tone.

"No, is not that!" replied Jemky. "It is just that-"

Suddenly, Diddy saw that the four of them were a little distracted arguing, so he stealthily took Dixie's arm again and whispered to her.

"Let's go," Diddy said to Dixie as they tried to leave.

"You're not going to leave here!" Rocky exclaimed, stopping them again, and then gripping Diddy tighter. "You're not leaving here, monkey!"

Then the other three kids crowded around Diddy again, but Dixie stood in their way again to defend him.

"No, leave him!" she exclaimed, giving each of them a push.

"Hey, hey, girl, I'm not going to fight with you," Jemky exclaimed, staring at her.

"Well, you won't do it with Diddy either!" Dixie replied.

"You speak to us in that tone, don't you, stupid girl?!" Mandrew exclaimed, grabbing one of Dixie's locks tightly, before she gave him a single smack to make her let go.

"Don't talk to me like that, you nitty!" Dixie replied.

"Oh, do you want to fight?!" Rocky exclaimed, trying to go against her with Melenky.

"No, not to her!" Diddy stepped in to stop them.

"Don't get involved, you idiotic monkey!" Melenky replied, slapping him.

This time, Diddy did try as best he could to return the attacks to the four bad kids when they attacked him, although it didn't work out so well. After a few seconds, Dixie jumped in to defend him, but the quartet immediately began to push her away as well. The four kids continued trying to stop them both in a rough manner. Until, in a defensive move, Dixie slapped the four of them in succession, leaving them still for a few seconds.

"Ugh, you know what?! Let's better end this discussion!" exclaimed Jemky firmly. "It seems that now, apart from Diddy, we have *another* new toy... *Attack them both!*"

Suddenly, the four of them began to attack Diddy and Dixie. Diddy was taken by his tail, while Dixie was taken by her hair. They had them both trapped and began to attack them without letting them out, but suddenly... Dixie gained courage and gave Mandrew a single kick, followed by an attack with her hair that sent the mandrill boy flying a few meters away. The other three kids were shocked by such sudden movement from Dixie.

"Hmm, not bad for a girl," said the mandrill kid, standing up with a thirst for revenge. "But you can't beat all of us!"

Rocky and Jemky were going to attack her, but she punched each of them, knocking them to the ground. Melenky came after her to attack her as well, but she kicked him once and also knocked him to the ground.

"And what were you telling me?" Dixie exclaimed with her hands on her sides.

"You two, you'll see!" Jemky told them furiously, as they approached again to attack them both.

“Oh, yeah?” Dixie motioned to them with her fists in a fighting position. “*Rather, you will see-*”

“Uh, Dixie, we better run, run, *run!*” Diddy interrupted desperately as he took Dixie from her arm.

“Hey, but-”

“*Just run!*”

Dixie didn't want to escape, but Diddy was already running ahead, so she just followed him. Diddy was feeling more worried that the bully kids would hurt Dixie, much less he wanted to stay and fight with them in her presence.

“*DON'T FLEE, COWARDS!*” Mandrew shouted as the four of them followed them.

Another chase began, where Diddy and Dixie ran as fast as they could until they managed to get into the trees and hide behind some bushes so that the bully quartet would lose sight of them. While they were both in hiding, Diddy still couldn't believe how Dixie had made the decision to enroll in Kong Kollege.

“What's wrong with you today, Dixie?! Don't fight them, you'll get hurt. Just look at my eye!” whispered Diddy, looking desperate.

“Oh, come on! They're just kids our ages,” Dixie replied. “It can't be that hard to defend against them.”

“Oh, no, no, no, very serious mistake,” Diddy reaffirmed. “It's dangerous!”

“You faced those mandrills that were chasing me and my family; those are *really* dangerous.”

“*Ha!*” The four kids suddenly appeared and grabbed Diddy and Dixie by the hands. “*We got you, fools!*”

“*Let go of me!*” Dixie yelled as she tried to free herself from them.

Suddenly, Dixie slapped Rocky and Mandrew in the face, making them let go of her. Diddy, who was being held by Jemky and Melenky, tried to do the same but it didn't work.

“Ohhh, the monkey can't... *Ahhh!*” Jemky shouted as Dixie hit him to make him let go of Diddy.

Immediately, Diddy went to Dixie. Now the two of them were face to face with their four bad classmates, as if about to start a fight.

“Oh, well, do you want to fight?” Jemky told them with a malicious tone and hitting his fists. “*So, let's see who wins!*”

“With pleasure!” Dixie answered them in the same way, before whispering to Diddy. “Come on, Diddy, you can do it.”

“But... are you serious?” Diddy asked her, confused.

“Yes, you can, I know you can!” Dixie exclaimed with attitude.

"So, let's fight, you fool monkeys!" Rocky yelled at them, before heading towards both of them along with the group.

Dixie got into a fighting stance and, also encouraging Diddy, began another confrontation with the quartet of bully children. Even if Diddy was not at all prepared for the moment, he decided to stay at least so as not to leave Dixie alone. Diddy managed to punch Mandrew, but he hit him harder and knocked him down, so he just defended himself and tried to avoid them. Meanwhile, Dixie was a little better at fighting those kids; to any of the four that approached her, she parried their attacks and returned them, and even performed spinning attacks with her hair; the latter was what gave her enough advantage to fight.

A while later, the four of them seemed to be tired of just fighting with their hands, so they grabbed fallen tree branches. Diddy and Dixie, therefore, also did the same, and began to fight as if it were a sword fight. But unfortunately, Diddy was still a little nervous, which made it difficult for him to attack, so he went to hide behind a tree.

"Look, the monkey is a chicken!" Mandrew mocked him, earning laughter from the group.

"Don't call him that!" Dixie defended him. "He is strong!"

"Oh, yeah?!" Jemky replied in a mocking tone. "Well, let him show us and fight like a real ape! And well! This fight isn't over yet, little girl."

The confrontation continued, this time being Dixie against the quartet. She didn't want to be left behind and attacked the four of them as much as she could. Thanks to her hair, she could perform quick movements and also reach higher by jumping on them. A while later, Dixie was already leaving them tired and on the verge of giving up. Diddy just watched the fight with some concern for her; he wanted to go defend her but he knew he would lose.

"Okay... okay. I give up... You... win," Mandrew said, panting exhaustively and lying down on the ground later. "You're not bad for a girl."

"I give up too..." Rocky added in the same way. "I want... to rest for a while."

"Ohh, I need to go home right now," Melenky added, lying down on the ground with the two of them.

"What?!" You don't have to give up! *What's wrong with you?!"* Jemky reproached them, standing up. "Fight like apes!"

"I fight like an ape, but... I'm tired," Mandrew responded while breathing heavily.

Dixie still stood in a fighting stance, glaring hard at the four. Jemky was the only one who didn't seem to want to give up yet. Then he stared at Dixie for a few seconds and walked toward her, this time more calmly and seriously.

"Hey, girl... It's okay, I give up too. Let's not fight anymore, okay?" Jemky told her in a calmer tone. "It seems like you're very strong and you don't give up, huh?" he added, smiling at her while he adjusted his hairdo and his vest. "I like your attitude," he whispered, winking at her closely.

Dixie looked at him strangely at that gesture, while Diddy, from his hiding place, couldn't help but feel some annoyance... one that he hadn't felt before this time.

"Do you know anything else?" Jemky continued, taking Dixie's hair with some delicacy. "I think you're also cute-"

"Oh, hey, I think you have something up your nose," Dixie pointed out.

"Uh, really?" Jemky asked as he tried to look at his own nose. "Oh, it's a blow that Diddy-"

Immediately, Dixie gave him a spinning attack with her hair and knocked him to the ground.

"Don't get close to me like that!" Dixie warned him with her fists raised.

"Hey, I was just telling you," Jemky replied, standing up. "I just told you that-"

"Don't get close to her-" Diddy exclaimed, giving Jemky a push, but he gave him a stronger push back.

"Oh, look!" Jemky interrupted. "The chicken monkey has just come out to defend-"

Immediately, Dixie gave him another spinning hair attack.

"Don't tell him that!" Dixie replied.

Suddenly, Jemky began to look furious and as if he wanted to continue opposing Diddy and Dixie, seeing that they were having the courage to confront them.

"Huh, *stupid monkeys!*" he exclaimed, bumping his fists. "Do you want to continue fighting-"

"Leave them, Jemky!" Rocky interrupted, looking tired. "Let's have lunch, I'm dying of hunger."

"Yes, tomorrow we'll continue bothering these moronic monkeys," Mandrew added in the same way.

"Our dads will be angry if we're late," Melenky added. "Remember that they'll arrive today."

"Oh, all right, all right," Jemky replied in a protesting tone, rolling his eyes. "This doesn't stay like this, couple of dwarfs, especially with you, girl!" he warned them both firmly.

Diddy's bully classmates, and now also Dixie's, finally left the place, since apparently, they had to get home for lunch and they even looked exhausted from fighting so much. Diddy had never seen them give up, which surprised him a lot, especially seeing that Dixie had given them their lesson.

After all that conflict, Diddy and Dixie started walking while talking about what happened.

"Hey, Dixie... I didn't know that about you," Diddy said, looking amazed and smiling. "Y-you defended yourself very well. Believe me, I'm... surprised. You gave those fools what they deserved," he added admiringly now that he had realized Dixie's bravery. "You were nice."

"Oh, thanks," Dixie replied, smiling a little, before frowning. "Geez, those four kids are really hateful... Hey, but why couldn't you fight? They're not that difficult to face."

"I can never counterattack them well, they always win and I don't want to hurt them either because I'll get in trouble," Diddy responded with frustration and then sighed. "Hey, Dixie... are you sure you want to be in that school with those four fools as classmates?"

"Diddy, the thing is..." Dixie said, pausing before answering. "You saved my cousins, my sister and me from those evil mandrills... If it weren't for you, we would no longer be alive and... in some way I wanted to repay you, and when you told me about your situation, I thought it would be the opportunity to do so."

Diddy adopted a look of surprise and at the same time concerned at Dixie's response. While he was sure that he had saved her and her family, he also felt somewhat guilty about her getting involved in his situation.

"Oh, no, Dixie, you had nothing to worry about," Diddy told her in a worried tone. "I just wanted to save you and that's it."

"No, Diddy, you literally saved our lives," she responded, smiling a little. "We didn't know how to thank you."

"But... I wouldn't want something bad to happen to you because of this."

"Don't worry, Diddy. Trust me," Dixie added, nodding, "I can defend myself against kids like them, I have done it before. They're not even armed now like you told me... By the way, I really don't see a problem if you tell Donkey about that, are you really not going to tell him?"

"Uhh, no... I just can't; I don't feel ready," he responded unsurely. "And I wouldn't want to continue mentioning the topic... Anyway, still... I also thank you for giving those four fools a lesson, Dixie," Diddy responded after sighing and smiling a little again. "Well, just be very careful, okay?"

"Okay," Dixie said with a small smile. To tell the truth, Diddy's classmates seemed to her like just hateful children who just wanted to feel important. "Hey, by the way, do you know how to do the homework that Mrs. Wrinkly left today? I just learned that lesson."

"Of course, it's very easy. If you want, I can help you," Diddy responded kindly.

"Thanks, Diddy, I just don't understand it well. I haven't been to school for almost a couple of years."

"I could teach you everything we've been taught so far to keep you up to date with the cycle," Diddy added. "How about?"

"Sounds great! How about we meet up later?" Dixie suggested.

"Okay, you can come to my house, or better to yours. We can even play with Chunky, Kiddy and Tiny as always."

"Okay, then I'll wait for you at mine," Dixie replied, smiling. "I'll let them know you're going to our house... Okay, then see you later, Diddy."

"See you later, Dixie," he replied, smiling back at her. "We'll meet later."

Then, Dixie left for her house, and Diddy did the same at his. But suddenly, as he was walking away from her, Diddy turned to look at her and stared at her with a smile. He was worried because now she would also go to school and the bad kids might do mean things to her like they did to him, but then, he remembered how strong and brave she was when she stood up to them. He had been

amazed and even felt a little guilty for having underestimated her. Even so, in a certain way he thought that not everything would be bad... because now he could see her every day at school.

A few days ago, Diddy had realized that he was having a very strange and new feeling for him. He didn't know how to explain it well, but... Dixie seemed to him like a very... nice girl. He smiled in the moments when he was with her and...

"But what am I thinking?" he said to himself in his mind after having thought for a while about those affirmations about... Dixie.

Chapter 8: Homeworks

That same afternoon, Diddy was preparing to go to Dixie's house. He was in the living room picking up some books and school supplies to go. Minutes later, Donkey arrived in the room and noticed what Diddy was doing.

"So, Dixie is in school now," Donkey said, smiling. "That's great. You'll have a new company. Will you go to her house now?"

"Yes, right now," Diddy replied in kind. "I'll come back later."

"Okay, little buddy," Donkey added, patting him on the shoulder. "Have a good time."

"See you later, Donkey," Diddy said as he headed for the door.

Diddy left the house and went downstairs to finally leave. Meanwhile, Donkey stared at him until he lost his sight, and later smiled; for some reason, he seemed to notice that Diddy looked quite smiling during those last few days... and much more now that he saw him leave.

Later, Diddy had arrived at Dixie's house and knocked on the door. A few seconds later, Tiny peeked out and greeted him, being accompanied by the other three young kongs.

"Hi, Diddy!" the four of them said at the same time.

"Hi, friends!" Diddy greeted them back cheerfully.

"Will you come and play with us?" Tiny said, taking Diddy's arm along with Kiddy.

"Then, now we have homework," Diddy replied, shrugging and smiling.

"Diddy didn't come to play now," Dixie added with a few small laughs. "We're going to do school work."

"Oh, really?" Tiny said, putting on a pleading face. "What if we play for a while first? Say yes!"

"Tiny, we can't now," Dixie said. "We'll be busy right now. Or we could play later when we finish, okay?"

"But sure," Tiny said, pointing to them with a playful look.

Then, Diddy and Dixie went outside the house to study more quietly, and sat under a tree where there were also rocky or wooden surfaces to place their belongings.

"Now, we can start," Dixie said, taking some pencils.

"Have you seen anything about this topic before?" Diddy asked, showing the homework they had to do.

"I remember something, but I didn't finish seeing it in depth. You know, I wasn't in school last year."

"Okay, it's not that hard after you finish understanding it, you'll see," Diddy said smiling.

"Although, it's quite extensive and even becomes frustrating."

"Do you usually take too long to finish a homework like that?" Dixie asked as she began to write.

"At first, yes... While that wasn't the worst part, the really frustrating thing is that almost always those fool kids would break my homework, and then I had to make up an excuse for Wrinkly."

"Wow, how wicked those kids," Dixie said in disgust, before continuing to write. "How can they be so inconsiderate?"

"'Inconsiderate' is too small for them, believe me," Diddy added, rolling his eyes. "But hey, I'll warn you that you must protect your schoolwork at all costs from them."

"Which of those four kids is the most annoying?"

"Well, what do I say, I would say the orangutan and the mandrill, that is, Jemky and Mandrew. Although the truth is, all of them have their way of being evil. Melenky, the red-footed one, is also too annoying."

"The orangutan boy pretended to be nice to me at break," Dixie said, frowning.

"Bah, he's just a braggart, believe me he is. He is the one that usually begins to annoy and is tremendous critical; the same as Mandrew, although the latter, on the other hand, is more mocking and usually goes with the flow; Melenky is also another, although he is somewhat clumsy at times, but he is also an annoying mocker. Rocky could be said to be the least evil, but he's also annoying."

"Woah, is there no one who has controlled those kids?"

"No idea, they just like to do their antics and enjoy the evil of others. They're complete idiots... Did you ever have classmates like that too? That is, not *exactly* like them, but similar."

"Yes, I did," Dixie replied as she continued to write. "On one occasion, there were two chimpanzee boys who likewise liked to tease me and steal my things from school. And on another occasion, it was four gorilla girls who passed by pulling my hair or hitting me every time I saw them."

"Really?" And what did you do there?... Could you stop them or something?"

"Well, in the first case I told my parents, and they took action with the school and at least found the parents of those children to stop them. In the second case, I did the same, but those girls continued to tease me, until my parents taught me to defend myself well and I was able to face them so that they would at least leave me alone. Although well, if you ask, none of those children were doing inappropriate things like what you told me about the four of them now."

"Wow, at least you could stop them," Diddy said, smiling. "Now I see how you were able to give those four their comeuppance today, it's like no one messes with you," he added jokingly.

"Hey, with those four you might have the courage to face them too," Dixie replied with a little laugh. "I mean, if you give them a lesson, they may stay like clowns thinking that you would not answer them back, at least so that they stop messing with you if you do not want to tell anyone that. In addition... maybe they're just threatening you to scare you."

"Well, I'd like to believe that, but... Uh, I don't know," Diddy said before sighing. "Although anyway, it doesn't sound bad to answer them to lower the intensity of their evils, and someday I know that I will stop seeing them."

"Hey, and by the way, I've finished writing this part," Dixie said, showing him the sheet. "What's next?"

"Well, this is where the resolution of this exercise will begin," Diddy replied before pointing to a notebook of his. "As I said, first you must place these numbers like this..."

Diddy went on to explain the homework to Dixie, in addition to other previous topics he was supposed to show her. He felt great about being able to help her and, likewise, Dixie didn't have so much trouble catching what he was saying; after all... she felt at ease to hear his explanation.

Meanwhile, inside the house, there were Tiny, Kiddy and Chunky leaning out the window. Apparently, the three were spying on Diddy and Dixie stealthily.

"Hey, do you believe that?" Chunky asked Tiny, smiling with a look of surprise.

"Just look at them," Tiny said, looking out from the window with a broad smile. "Don't they look cute together?"

"Chunky still doesn't believe it," Chunky added, crossing his arms, but then looked up. "Or it could be..."

"Come on, I know my sister," Tiny replied with a playful look. "I mean, look at her, I don't remember seeing her before... *so happy* talking to someone."

The three of them were spying on Diddy and Dixie for a while. And to tell the truth, both were seen with certain good energies speaking... It was as if in addition to being in a conversation about school topics, they also enjoyed each other's company.

Later, Diddy and Dixie had finished the day's homework, so they gathered their things and went back into Dixie's house... where Tiny, Kiddy and Chunky had been quick to pretend they were on other business.

"We're finished, at last," Dixie said, putting her things on the table.

"Well, friends," Diddy added, smiling at them. "Do you think if we play something now?"

"Yes!" exclaimed Tiny, Kiddy and Chunky at the same time.

"Let's play hide and seek!" Tiny added, jumping with excitement. "Let's go!"

After a long day, Diddy and his four friends started playing for a while outside the house. They stayed so long that it was almost dark. Diddy had not played like this with all of them for several days, so he stayed until the hours were when he had to return home.

"See you later, friends," Diddy said after collecting his things. "See you."

"See you soon, Diddy," replied the others, except Dixie, who walked him to the door.

"Diddy... Thank you for your help," Dixie said, smiling outside the house.

"No problem, Dixie. You can ask me for help whenever you want," Diddy replied, smiling back. When suddenly... he had a strange *feeling* after looking at Dixie into his eyes. "Uh... See you soon, I'll see you tomorrow," he finished, before leaving.

"See you tomorrow... Diddy," Dixie replied, still smiling at him.

Then, Diddy left the place, and Dixie entered the house... But then, she stared at him from the window as he walked away... and then she blushed a little; she began to think about how pleasant it felt to be in his company. They were both good friends, although... she thought maybe there was something *special* about him.

Dixie, after her deep thoughts, turned around and had a little scare after seeing her sister and cousins who were looking at her strangely, and even suspiciously.

"Hey, little sister," Tiny said a playful smile. "There is one *thing* we wanted to ask you."

"Huh, about what?" Dixie asked in confusion.

Suddenly, Tiny and Chunky looked up at each other, while smiling in a mischievous way.

"Who tells her?" Chunky asked, looking away.

Then, Tiny turned to her sister, earning a look of surprise from her. As she approached her, she whispered something in her ear... which made Dixie open her eyes to the maximum instantly.

"What?!" Dixie exclaimed, showing herself somewhat paralyzed, and then frowning her gaze. "*No!* Where did they get this absurd idea?"

"Oh, come on, Dixie, I know so," Tiny hinted at giving her a little push. "You were nervous before he came."

"And you looked too happy while you were with him," Chunky continued in the same way.

"And besides, what were you watching from the window, huh?" Tiny continued, looking up and crossing her arms.

"Uhh, well," Dixie replied in confusion. "I was just looking... the trees and-"

"Oh, yeah, the trees," Chunky interrupted in a mocking tone and crossing his arms. "If we saw clearly how you followed him with your eyes."

"What are you talking about?!" Dixie said, looking at them strangely. "I wasn't looking at Diddy... Uh, I mean, I was just looking at the trees."

"Yes, yes, yes, of course, you continue saying: *the trees*," Chunky added in the same tone.

"And by the way," Tiny said with a mocking tone, "now that you go to school, you will see him *every* day and you will become *more friends*. You must be *very happy* about that, right?"

"W-what? What are you saying?!" Dixie replied, beginning to blush. "And why?"

"Wow, wow, look at how our dear little cousin and sister gets," Chunky said, pointing to Dixie's cheeks.

"No, it's not true!" Dixie replied. "We are only friends, just as he is your friend too; he is a friend to all of us."

"Well, he's our friend, but it seems like he's something with you... more *special*," Tiny said, emphasizing and looking up.

"Yes, even he looks happy next to you," Chunky added.

"Diddy and Dixie couple!" Kiddy exclaimed suddenly.

"*No!* No, no, no and *no!* That will never happen!" said Dixie as she blushed her way up the stairs to her room. "Those are just assumptions of yours!"

"It seems that someone here is... *in love*," Tiny said playfully, and began to laugh with Chunky and Kiddy.

For her part, Dixie only quickened her pace to go upstairs and lock herself in her room, trying to ignore the comments of her cousins and sister.

Chapter 9: Second Day

The next day had arrived, and it was another day of school. Diddy was coming to Kong Kollege and, as he always did, he tried to sneak into some bushes so as not to be seen by the quartet of bully children... Although on occasions like this, it didn't turn out so well.

"Here you are, lizard!" Jemky exclaimed, catching him by surprise and knocking him to the ground.

"Dumb monkey!" Mandrew added, lunging at him.

Immediately, Diddy tried to grab their arms to stop them, but Rocky and Melenky stopped him.

"No, no, you won't take us for fools, you stupid monkey!" Rocky said, holding him down.

Diddy tried to get up, but the four of them continued to push and slap him so continuously that he was blocking himself again to act defensively.

"Hey!" exclaimed another voice, causing everyone to stop instantly. *"What are you doing to Diddy?!"*

As they looked, everyone realized that it was Dixie, who had arrived just as they were attacking Diddy. The four bully children didn't know what to say at first, but within seconds, they looked at her in a threatening way as well.

"You!" Mandrew exclaimed, pointing to her and heading towards her along the group. "You owe us one, dwarf!"

"It seems to me that with you we have a fight to end, don't we, girl?!" Jemky added in the same way.

"No one makes fun of us!" Melenky added.

"Oh, yeah?!" Dixie replied in a mocking tone. "Well, I don't have any problem with you."

"Huh, in that tone are you coming to talk to us, girl?" Rocky said, looking at her threateningly. "Nobody talks to us like that, did you understand, you silly little monkey?"

"And neither will I, *no one* is going to talk to me like that," replied Dixie, looking at them in the same way. "And if you want to fight, well-"

"Hey, well, wait a moment," Diddy interrupted, standing in front of Dixie and trying to pluck up the courage. "L-look, it seems to me that now is *not* a time to start fighting like that, so-"

"Shut up, you lizard monkey!" Jemky interrupted, pushing and slapping him with the group.

"No! Leave him, lice kids!" Dixie exclaimed, pushing the four of them.

"Huh, do you also want your due?!" Melenky said, grabbing her by the hair tightly.

"Girl with corn hair!" Mandrew added in the same way.

Instantly, Dixie pulled both of their manes, before pushing them hard away.

"First learn to comb your hair, before messing with mine!" Dixie replied.

"Stupid, don't mess with Dixie!" Diddy exclaimed, slapping them too.

"Huh! So, now you two want to challenge us, right?!" Rocky replied, trying to pounce on Diddy and Dixie.

"It's over!" Jemky added in the same way. "Now you're going to see! Pair of dwarves!"

Dixie immediately acted defensively and gave Jemky and Rocky another push. Mandrew was going to attack her, but Diddy got in his way, being interrupted later by a few slapping from Melenky, but Dixie also intervened. Suddenly, a new confrontation had been set up between the quartet with Diddy and Dixie. For her part, Dixie showed no fear in confronting those bully children and, this time... Diddy wasn't lagging behind, mostly for helping Dixie and trying to protect her on certain occasions; he seemed to have taken a little more courage.

"Miserable monkey!" said Jemky, knocking and holding him down to the ground, but Diddy slapped him in the face to push him away. "Hey!"

"Idiot oaf!" Melenky told Diddy, lunging at him, but then received a push from Dixie.

"Nosy girl!" Mandrew said to Dixie, pushing her, but she grabbed his arm tightly.

Suddenly, Dixie made a spinning motion with her hair, pushing the four of them away suddenly and even managing to pause the fight for a while.

"How the heck do you do that?!" Melenky asked, looking at her strangely as he got up.

"No way!" Mandrew exclaimed again, going against her. "Don't even think that with your silly hair you're going to-"

"Wait, wait, silence!" Rocky interrupted them all and looked away. "There comes Wrinkly!"

Instantly, the other three kids stood still, before gathering with Rocky and starting to walk towards the schoolyard, as if nothing happened.

A while later, Wrinkly appeared on the way and spotted Diddy and Dixie in the distance, whom she immediately greeted.

Diddy and Dixie also headed towards the classroom, where they were reunited with the four bully children, who gave them withering glances from the side.

"Good morning, little ones!" Wrinkly said as she greeted several of her students. "Let's start class, come on."

While everyone was in their respective positions, the four bully children didn't stop making warning signs and threatening Diddy and Dixie with their eyes, in turn that the two, especially Dixie, returned the same gestures.

The class continued normally during the day, where Wrinkly had them do exercises from her lessons to the children. For her part, Dixie had a hard time keeping up with the lessons, but Wrinkly

was willing to help her up and catch her up, as was Diddy, who also lent her a hand.

Later, it was break hours, so everyone went out into the yard and began to gather in their respective groups.

"Were you able to do today's exercise well?" Diddy asked Dixie as they ate their lunches.

"At least a little better than yesterday," Dixie replied. "Although I may need to understand the second step better."

"It's not that complicated once you understand it," Diddy added, smiling, before finishing his lunch. Later, he got up. "I'll be right back; I must go and present the other homework to Wrinkly."

"Okay, Diddy," she replied.

Dixie finished taking her lunch and picked it up. Then, she also got up and started walking around the schoolyard to distract herself for a while.

Suddenly, as she was walking and looking into a corner, she heard someone coming walking near her. Turning around, she took on a look of instant strangeness, and even placed herself in a fighting position if necessary.

"How are you, Dixie?" Jemky said, greeting her as he walked beside her. "Hey, don't worry, I didn't come to fight now in case you think about it," he added with a little laugh.

"Uh, and do *you need* anything?" asked Dixie, still looking at him suspiciously.

"Well... I was just coming to greet you," Jemky replied, smiling at her. "By the way, I didn't know you fought so well... I see that you are very strong. How did you learn to do those movements with your hair?"

"I've always done them," Dixie replied with a short-forced smile. "It's from birth."

"I see, it seems that it's very useful to you... And it looks great to you," he added, winking at her and still smiling.

"Uhh, yes... Thank you," Dixie replied, still with a forced smile, and then looking away. "And well, if you'll excuse me... *right* now I had to talk to Mrs. Wrinkly about something important," she added as an excuse, before pulling away and leaving.

"Really? What happened?" Jemky asked her as if he was trying to keep talking to her.

"It's just a big deal," Dixie added, as if she was dodging him and then just leaving.

Within seconds, Dixie only retreated at a brisk pace heading towards the classroom. Meanwhile, Jemky stared at her with a look of strangeness, before shrugging his shoulders.

"You're already trying to flirt with that girl," Melenky said, appearing along with Rocky.

"Well, I have to try it, or not?" Jemky replied with a shrug.

"If girls don't like you like they used to," Rocky added with a few small laughs.

"Of course yes, and don't be envious," Jemky replied with a mocking tone.

"And am I going to envy you?" Rocky said wryly. "Besides, that girl is also like that dumb monkey, and also she is always trying to challenge us; we're not going to allow ourselves to be dominated by her or have compassion."

Later, the class continued until it was noon, where everyone would go home. As Diddy and Dixie were about to leave, Wrinkly spoke to them.

"Hey, Diddy, I think I'll need you to help Dixie catch up," Wrinkly said. "Could it be that you can meet during this week? The following weeks will be some important lessons."

"Of course, no problem," Diddy replied, smiling. "In fact, we met yesterday."

"Oh, that's very good," Wrinkly replied. "I see that you are good friends. So, Dixie has to be prepared for next week's lessons."

"Okay, Mrs. Wrinkly," Dixie replied, cheerful.

Eventually, Wrinkly left, so Diddy and Dixie continued on their way. Both were going to continue calmly... although Diddy remembered something to watch out for, especially for Dixie.

"We'll go this way. Come on," Diddy whispered to Dixie, pointing to a narrow path.

The two began to walk stealthily and watched that none of the bully children walked nearby. But even though they had taken a different route, it didn't take that long for those four children to suddenly appear to them.

"Where do you think you're going, you pair of dwarves?!" Rocky told them, appearing with the group.

Resisting the urge to fight back, Diddy grabbed Dixie's arm and tried to veer off the way, but those kids gave them no time to escape and got in their way.

"You don't move from here!" Jemky told them as they held them both tightly.

"No, get away!" Diddy replied as he struggled with Dixie to free himself from the four kids.

"Stupid pair of pathetic monkeys!" Melenky exclaimed as they began to slap them.

Diddy and Dixie were not far behind and tried as they could to return the hitting to the four, this time having more success in pushing them away, and where Dixie ended with a spinning movement with her hair that blocked their view, and they could move away from them.

"Do you want to fight?!" Dixie said, waving her fists.

"We don't have any problem!" Mandrew replied before heading towards them along the group.

Immediately, Diddy and Dixie got into fighting position and began to resist the bully quartet and even return the attacks. In the middle of the conflict, Jemky gave Diddy a strong slap, but he returned it almost instantly, although winning another from Mandrew and Melenky.

"What very high have you put on, or not, monkey?!" Mandrew said in a threatening tone, before raising his fist to hit him. "Now abstain you-"

But suddenly, Dixie made another attack with her hair that sent those children away in one fell swoop.

"Ugh! Little beast with corn hair!" Mandrew exclaimed, rising.

"Fight well and stop wearing your ugly hair!" Melenky added in the same way.

"Ugly your disheveled manes!" Dixie replied, furious. "Learn to comb your hair!"

"I do comb my hair, for your information!" Rocky replied.

"Me too!" Jemky added. "It's Mandrew and Melenky who are disheveled."

"*Hey!*" *replied* Mandrew and Melenky.

"Anyway!" Rocky interrupted, bumping his fists and approaching Diddy and Dixie, looking at them threateningly. "It seems to me that you two-"

Before long, Dixie pushed him away again with a spinning movement with her hair, causing the rest of the group to rush back to attack them. Both Diddy and Dixie set out to fight back and respond to the attacks of the bad boys, although this time, Dixie gave them more attacks with her hair and strong pushes on several occasions, which was even leaving less opportunity for the four of them to perform an attack... And they even seemed to be getting tired.

"Wait, wait, wait!" exclaimed Jemky amid Dixie's attacks. "*Stop!*"

"Okay, okay, stop!" Rocky added in the same way as covering himself with his arms.

Dixie paused for a while as the four of them seemed to be panting a little tiredly, which implied that they were giving up on wanting to continue. Even, like the day before, they were sitting for a while on the floor until little by little they were manifesting their exhaustion.

"I... I can't anymore," Melenky said, leaning back on the floor.

"Me neither," Rocky added in the same way.

"Hey, but why?!" Jemky said to his group showing all tired, but at the same time, as if he didn't want to give up either. "We still have to continue!"

"Well, speak for you this time," Mandrew added with a shrug. "What's more, I think we should go to lunch now."

"No, why are you stopping?!" Jemky replied, still standing. "Let's keep fighting with those dwarf monkeys!"

Suddenly, the four of them had started a discussion, and they even seemed to have been distracted... which gave some advantage to Dixie and Diddy, where the latter beckoned her to simply leave from that area. Both began to walk stealthily until they took a good distance with the quartet, and then accelerated their steps until they entered the trees.

"Look, and those two escape!" Jemky was heard shouting in the distance.

Diddy and Dixie climbed up some trees and hid among the branches to lose sight of the four. They both heard the quartet nearby, although they seemed to have lost them.

"Let's go," Diddy whispered to Dixie.

When both of them were already farther away from the area, neither of the four could be heard anymore, so now they two could be calmer and smiled at each other.

"Those fools were left behind," Dixie said with a victorious smile.

"And they seem to get tired just like yesterday," Diddy added in the same way. "I've never seen them like this, really."

"They had to get tired at some point... And hey, today you looked more confident to face them, you did very well," she added, smiling in amazement.

"R-really?" Diddy asked in confusion.

"Yes, that is, today I saw that you were not afraid of them, you even counterattacked them all the time. You had more courage!"

"Hey, not like that either," Diddy replied with a slight laugh. "I mean... It's not that I wasn't afraid of them, I just wanted to stop them."

"Well, it's not so much that you're not afraid of them, I was too, I admit, but this time you had more courage to face them... And that's what you can do to stop idiot kids like them, because that's what they want to achieve: just annoy someone who seems weaker and helpless than them, but when you answer them, deep down they get scared. Well, it's not always like that, but most of the time it is."

"I see... Wow, maybe that's true."

"And that's what you can do so you don't have to put up with them so much," Dixie said, smiling firmly. "And well, I know you don't want to do that, but... another way to fix this situation is to tell Donkey and-" she added before getting a serious look from him. "Okay, maybe you're not ready, but consider it too."

"I don't know yet," Diddy replied, sighing and shrugging. "I wouldn't want a scandal to be made later... Anyway, and by the way, will we meet today too?"

"Of course," Dixie replied. "I'll wait for you this afternoon."

"Well, then see you later, Dixie."

"Okay, Diddy. See you later," Dixie said goodbye, before Diddy followed suit.

Then, both went their own way to their respective homes. For some reason, Diddy had noticed that this time he didn't feel so scared while he was returning home from school, in fact... he felt in a better frame of mind remembering what Dixie had told him about being able to face those four bully children. Suddenly, he turned to look at her in the distance... and smiled for a few seconds.

In the afternoon of that same day, Diddy had arrived back at Dixie's house, as he would continue to help her catch up on school lessons.

At the moment he arrived, Dixie and company received him the same as the day before and, in the same way, Tiny and Kiddy wanted to play with Diddy and Dixie, although they promised to do so after they finished. Diddy and Dixie headed to the same corner outside, where they began to take their belongings to start with.

"Were you able to understand today's lesson better, Dixie?" Diddy asked her as he rummaged through some sheets.

"I think so, I was even able to advance today's homework," Dixie replied, smiling. "I just had to make sure Kiddy didn't play with my notebook or my homework."

"Wow, he may be like a younger brother," Diddy said with a little laugh.

"He's practically my younger brother," Dixie added in the same way. "The four of us have already considered ourselves siblings, in fact."

"How does it feel to have siblings and live with them?" Diddy asked curiously.

"Well, what could I tell you? They have been my company in these difficult times and we have stuck together," Dixie replied, smiling at first, before getting serious and shrugging. "Although of course, we also have fights and arguments almost every day," she added, laughing a little.

"That sounds very changeable," Diddy commented, smiling with some confusion.

"You haven't had any siblings, Diddy?" asked Dixie. "Or something like a sibling?"

"No, it was always just me. Although sure, I could say that Donkey is sometimes like an older brother, and other times like a father."

"All your life have you lived alone with him?"

"Not exactly. I lived with my parents until I was four, then I stayed with Donkey since he was always very close to me, and then he adopted me after my parents... didn't come back anymore."

"What? Really?" Dixie said, looking astonished. "That is, your parents... are gone?"

"Yes, they... you know, they're not here anymore," Diddy replied, changing to a sad expression, though trying not to be at the time. "Although, well, that's a delicate issue. But yes, since I was a little child, I have lived with Donkey."

"Wow, it's almost like how it happened to me. Tiny and I also stayed with our aunt and uncle after our parents left, although... they also left this world afterwards," Dixie added in the same way. "Uh, but I understand, those are also sensitive issues."

"Yes, I know... I don't think now is to talk about this," Diddy added with a short and light smile.

"Hey, and then, if Donkey is your uncle, does that mean Candy is going to be your aunt one day?"

"I guess so, but that's when they get married," Diddy replied, smiling again. "Although, I don't think they will marry for now so soon."

"By the way, I've finished this part, what's next?" Dixie asked as she finished writing on her sheet.

"Well, here comes a very long step, so don't lose focus," he added, pointing to the sheet.

"But is it very difficult or not?"

"Well, if you memorize it well, it won't be," Diddy replied with a forced smile. "But don't worry, it's not so difficult either."

Then, Diddy began explaining the day's homework to Dixie, in addition to other topics they had seen in class. Between times, both also talked about some random topic they mentioned or even joked about some school matter.

But there was something that they both had not realized, and was that Tiny, Kiddy and Chunky were again behind the window spying on them in the distance, where between the three of them they made gestures and pointed at them, while laughing a little.

"This is getting interesting," Chunky said, smiling with his eyes raised.

"Oh, look at them," Tiny added in a tender tone. "They would be really perfect."

Later, Diddy and Dixie were returning to the house, where they had been laughing a little or joking between the two... which earned several looks of suspicion from Tiny and company.

When they met with the other young kongs, they started playing for a while until it was dark. And, at the time of leaving, Dixie went to accompany Diddy to the outside of the house.

"See you tomorrow, Diddy," Dixie said as she said goodbye. "And thank you for helping me today as well."

"It's nothing, Dixie. Whenever you want, don't hesitate to ask me for help," Diddy replied, smiling. "See you."

With that said, Diddy left for his home. When suddenly, he turned one last time to look at her, to which Dixie smiled and made another goodbye gesture from the distance. Diddy didn't know why, but he was also smiling on the way home and especially... he had been thinking about the moments with Dixie.

At night, Donkey and Diddy were in their living room watching television. Donkey was on the couch, while Diddy was on his hanging tire. They both watched a comedy show that they laughed out loud.

"Hey, that was really good," Diddy said as he finished watching the show. "At least it was much better than yesterday's chapter."

"It's normal, they always do much better the next episode," Donkey replied, turning off the TV, before taking a break. "And how did it go today, little buddy?"

"Well, all right there," Diddy replied, swinging on his back on the tire. "At Dixie's house it was the same as yesterday, and it seems that she is also doing well in school."

Suddenly, Donkey was silent for a while and looked at Diddy with a small smile and with some curiosity too... As if something was in his mind after knowing enough of his nephew's expressions.

"Hey, Diddy, and by the way," Donkey said later, "there is one thing I wanted to ask you."

"Huh? What is it?" Diddy replied, still distracted on his tire.

"What do you think about... Dixie?" he asked, smiling and looking at him sideways.

"Dixie? Well... she's a good friend," Diddy replied somewhat confused. "Why?"

"Well, I don't know how you take this, but... lately you hang out with her, play with her, laugh with her."

"Uh, we're friends, or what do you mean?" Diddy asked with a shrug. Suddenly, Donkey gave him a playful look until, within seconds, Diddy seemed to grasp the question. "Hey! Do you think that..."

"What if I tell you that's what you think I'm thinking?" Donkey said with a small laugh.

"Oh, no, no, no, not that, what are you thinking?!" Diddy replied, standing up firmly.

"Oh, come on, little buddy," Donkey exclaimed with the same playful look. "What's wrong?"

"Hey, no, Donkey! I wouldn't see her that way," Diddy replied, turning around.

"Hmm, are you *sure*?" asked Donkey, crossing his arms and looking at him suspiciously. "Because, do you know something else? I have noticed you are *very* happy these days; I didn't see you so much like that for going to classes."

"So can't I be happy about it?" Diddy asked, looking at him strangely.

"I'm just asking," Donkey said, shrugging and giving a sideways look. "And *just* this week Dixie went into school and you've been talking about her a lot."

"Oh, I already told you that we are friends, nothing more!" Diddy replied.

"But what if I told you, that's how I started with Candy?" said Donkey, looking up. "*Being friends.*"

"Well, with Dixie we'll only be friends!"

"Oh, come on, Diddy, admit it!" he insisted, giving him a little push. "By any chance there is something *beyond*?"

"No and no!" Diddy replied more firmly. "And I don't know what this comes to, Donkey!"

Apparently, Donkey didn't want to give up on getting the information out of Diddy... In fact, he seemed to have learned of a *recent detail*, so he went to Diddy's backpack and began to rummage through it, then extracted one of the notebooks he had there.

"Well... And what do you tell me about this?" Donkey showed a page from Diddy's notebook, where 'by chance' was *Dixie's* name written on a heart.

Instantly, Diddy opened his eyes to the fullest, froze, and didn't know what to do at that moment... Actually, *he had written it himself recently*.

"W-what?!" Diddy exclaimed, immediately getting down to take Donkey's notebook and close it. "Hey, what do you do by rummaging through my stuff in the first place?!" he asked him to try to divert the topic.

"Rather, next time don't fall asleep on the table over your open notebooks," Donkey said in a mocking tone. "Much less if you were drawing *little hearts*."

"Uhh... No, no, no, but that's not what you think, Donkey! I write the names of my friends like this, look," Diddy said, now nervously, opening the notebook and rummaging through other pages. "Oh, wow, I seem to have forgotten to write the rest of the names. Look, it's getting late and I'm sleepy, I'm going to sleep. See you tomorrow, Donkey!" he added quickly as he made his way to his room.

"Ohh, how tender!" Donkey said in a tone that was both tender and mocking. "My little buddy is in lov-"

"I said no! See you tomorrow!" Diddy interrupted, closing the door immediately.

"They grow so fast," Donkey whispered, sighing to himself with a few small laughs.

Chapter 10: A New Emotion

The next day, Diddy was leaving his house, although this time... he kept receiving playful and suspicious gestures from Donkey, who had been reminding him of *what* he discovered in his notebook the night before. Diddy was just trying to downplay it and now he made an excuse that it was a detail he did for all his friends.

Then, Diddy headed towards Kong Kollege. For some reason... he wasn't feeling so nervous this time about going; he didn't know if it was because he had now been left thinking more about Donkey's embarrassing discovery, or if he was really more confident of making it to school.

Diddy tried to go with long steps in the vicinity of the schoolyard, when suddenly, the four bad kids appeared in front of him without further ado.

"Here you are, stupid vermin!" Jemky said, taking him by the shoulders.

Suddenly, Diddy gave Jemky a hard look, grabbed his arms and pushed them away forcefully.

"Hey, what are you trying to do, you idiot monkey?!" Jemky replied, trying to hold him down. "To us-"

But this time, Diddy grabbed him tightly by the shoulders and pushed him away until he fell to the ground. Then, he continued walking.

"Hey, what do you think?!" Rocky said, going to grab him forcefully by the arm.

Instantly, Diddy gave him a hard push, swallowing the fear that they might respond to him in a worse way. Mandrew and Melenky tried to pounce on him, but Diddy grabbed their arms tightly to each one while looking at them as if he didn't fear them.

"Miserable monkey!" Mandrew said about to beat him.

"Hey, why do you call Diddy that?" Dixie suddenly appeared.

The four of them turned to look at her, while Dixie began to move her ponytail as if she was threatening them. She was in every position to fight, although this time, the quartet didn't show themselves in the same way, but rather, they began to give some apparent forced smiles.

"Oh, hi, Dixie," Jemky said with a forced smile. "Nice to see you... And we were just greeting Diddy," he added, addressing Diddy. "How about you, Diddy? Nice to see you too."

"Ah, yes, yes, it's true," Rocky added in the same way. "How have you been, monkeys?"

"Yes, what has become of your lives? How are you doing?" Mandrew added, patting Diddy on the shoulder.

"Hey, we're not going to fight?" Melenky asked, looking confused, but then Rocky seemed to have given him a light pinch, while smiling his teeth at him. "Ahh, sure, how have you been, Diddy and Dixie?" he added with a forced smile.

Then, looking at the four of them strangely, Diddy headed towards Dixie and beckoned her to continue on their way to school. As they walked, Dixie also looked at them strangely and suspiciously. For some reason, the four of them didn't chase them this time, so they were both able to walk calmly to the courtyard. Diddy and Dixie only shrugged their shoulders after seeing that unusual behavior in those bully children.

Later, Wrinkly arrived and all the other children entered the classroom. The class was much better that day, in fact.

During the break hours, Diddy and Dixie walked together taking their lunches and talking about their days, and also about the four bully children... who this time, none of them approached them.

At the end of the day's class, Diddy and Dixie quickly headed for another shortcut that Diddy had planned to escape the quartet of evil children, although to their bad surprise, they accidentally ran into them when they were crossing some bushes. Both put themselves in position to fight with all the attitude, but this time... the four of them just looked at them two with some seriousness. Suddenly, Jemky started smiling at them a little.

"Oh, look who came," said the orangutan boy, though in an apparent sweet tone.

"But it's the fool monke- I mean, our little friends," Rocky added in the same way.

"Let's see, let's see, who are our favorite monkeys?" Mandrew said as if talking to little children.

"I think we should all hug each other!" Melenky exclaimed, showing emotion.

Suddenly, the four threw themselves into hugging Diddy and Dixie as a group, earning some looks of great strangeness from both.

"Children, what are you doing?!" Wrinkly suddenly appeared on the way, encountering the 'friendly' scene. "Oh, how nice it's to see how you have become good friends."

"Ahh, yes... yes, of course, Mrs. Wrinkly," Jemky replied with a forced smile along with the group. "We're best friends, and with Dixie too."

"That's very good, I'm very glad," Wrinkly replied, smiling at them, before continuing on her way. "Well, I'll leave you, kids. See you tomorrow, have a nice day."

"See you tomorrow, Mrs. Wrinkly," they all replied at the same time with forced smiles.

As Wrinkly walked away, Diddy and Dixie began to untie themselves from the four and escape, while looking sideways at each other and smiling forcibly. Immediately, both began to run until they got lost in the vegetation so as not to have to deal with those four bad children.

"What happened to those four today?" Diddy asked with a look of surprise when they were already away.

"Maybe they were going crazy," Dixie said with a small smile from the side. "Hmm, could it be that they gave up fighting?"

"Let's see if it's true," Diddy said in the same way, shrugging his shoulders. "I was still a little amused by their faces."

Then, both continued walking towards their homes, until they had to separate.

"By the way, Diddy, will you go to my house today?" Dixie asked him on the way.

"Of course, why not?... Did you understand today's lesson better?"

"Of course I do," Dixie replied cheerfully. "I already feel more prepared for next week... Wow, Mrs. Wrinkly is too kind."

"Yes, she's a sweetheart," Diddy added in the same way.

"How come she, being so sweet, married Cranky who is a... grouch?" Dixie asked with a little laugh.

"In fact, she's the one who knows how to master him best," Diddy replied with the same expression. "I don't understand that either, so don't blame yourself for asking."

"Have they only had one child?"

"Practically yes, my grandfather: Donkey Junior," Diddy replied, smiling a little, before getting serious. "But you know, he... he departed from this world in that conflict that took place many years ago; it's what was assumed because he never came back... And you know? Cranky and Wrinkly said they also had another twin son of my grandfather, but they lost him from a very young age because in the circus where they were he was bought for another circus."

"What?" Dixie exclaimed with shock. "So... did they sell him?"

"Not them, but the owners of that circus, sold him against their will to another circus, and never heard from him again... They hardly want to talk about it, by the way.

"Wow, that sounds terrible," Dixie said earnestly. "They couldn't see their son anymore... So, practically Donkey and your father were like their sons years later?"

"Yes, and in fact, they ended up growing up with them, and that," Diddy finished before stopping later on the way. "Well, I guess here is where we have to leave," he added with a small smile.

"Then I'll see you later," she replied in kind. "How about we then go out with Tiny, Kiddy and Chunky and have some coconuts?"

"Sure, it sounds good," Diddy said, smiling. "See you then, Dixie."

Both little kongs finished saying goodbye and each continued on their way home, but not before... saying goodbye for the last time from a distance while smiling at each other.

In the afternoon, Diddy was again taking his things to Dixie's house. In the previous days, he had been calm in those moments, but this time... he didn't stop feeling some embarrassment after seeing Donkey give him suspicious looks and even joked about that *matter that* was now manifesting in him regarding Dixie.

"Oh, are you going to visit Dixie yet, little buddy?" Donkey said, giving him little pushes playfully.

"Hey, don't bother! I'm going to help her with homework," he replied as he picked up a couple of notebooks. "And I already told you that I wrote that because she is my friend, and to all my friends I write the name like that."

"Oh, yes, yes, yes, of course," Donkey exclaimed mockingly. "And by chance, I remembered when I also wrote the name of Candy as well."

"Well, over there with you; it's different here with me," replied Diddy.

"And now I see that you hang out with her a lot, huh? It looks like your friendship could grow into a... something else," he added, looking up.

"Donkey!" Diddy exclaimed somewhat blushing as he walked out the door.

"Oh, look how you blush," Donkey pointed at Diddy's cheeks.

"Donkey," Diddy said again, trying to hide his blush. "I already explained to you well about the notebook, what you say will never happen and it's your assumption."

"*Sure*, if you say so," Donkey said with a little laugh. "Okay, good luck, little buddy," he added, patting him on the back.

Diddy finished saying goodbye to Donkey amid the banter, and then came down from the house. On his way to Dixie's house, he couldn't stop thinking about how he was feeling now... That new sensation he was having, began to occupy much of his thoughts and even make him imagine situations... with Dixie.

"*No, no, no! It can't be*," he told himself in his mind.

Even so, Diddy tried not to get carried away by those sensations; he never thought that something like that could happen to him... He was even feeling a little more excited than usual to go see Dixie at his house, but he tried to stay calm and think that he would only help him solve her homework like the good friends they had been until now.

Diddy arrived at his friends' house, being greeted by Dixie at first and then by the other three kongs... the latter being the ones who looked at Dixie with some suspicion at the time she went to meet Diddy.

"Come on, Diddy," Dixie said before heading together to their corner where they did their homework.

Both settled in and took out their sheets and other belongings to begin.

"Can we practice for next week's lesson?" Dixie asked.

"Don't you want to review this last exercise first?" Diddy asked, pointing to the sheet. "That is, it can be more complex for you."

"I was reviewing it a bit and it's almost like the previous ones. Come on, I want to try," she said with a look of pleading.

"Hey, but I'm serious, it's going to be more complicated like this."

"Are you telling me I won't be able to do it?" Dixie said with a stare fixed and mockingly.

"I don't speak that, but you really have to see how this is done here."

"But if I've seen it... Or let's bet five coconuts that the first one I'll do well," she said with a defiant look.

"Okay, if you say so," Diddy replied with a mocking look.

On the other hand, Tiny, Kiddy and Chunky were again behind the window looking at them and laughing quietly. And this time, Diddy and Dixie were also seen laughing and joking between the two while doing their homework. Between moments, one of the two looked at the other in moments of distraction and smiled, which raised more suspicions.

It was a couple of hours later until Diddy and Dixie returned to the house. As Dixie had proposed before, in the remainder of the afternoon, they went out together with Tiny, Kiddy and Chunky to have some coconuts and take a short walk in the nearby area as they had not done for weeks.

When the evening hours came, everyone returned to the house. It had been the last day Diddy helped Dixie catch up on school teaching. At the time of leaving, Diddy was together with Dixie, who had gone to say goodbye to him outside.

"Hey, Diddy... Thank you for helping me," Dixie said, smiling. "You are very smart."

"It's okay, Dixie," he replied, smiling back. "Don't forget to keep practicing for the next week... And make no mistake in that step of numbers," he added with a smile this time mocking.

"And you thought I wasn't going to be able to solve that last one?" she replied in the same way and crossing her arms. "By the way, I won the bet."

"Hey, it's not true, if in a resolution you had to cheat," Diddy replied with a mocking smile.

"Or you know what? Better if I get the top grade the other week, I'll win this game," she added with a defiant smile.

"Well, deal done," he replied with a few small laughs. Then, he patted her shoulder before leaving. "See you later, Dixie."

"See you soon, Diddy," she said goodbye in the same way.

Finally, Diddy left, but not before saying goodbye in the distance to Dixie and making some sign or joke between the two while smiling. Then Dixie returned to the interior of her house... but not before staying at the door for a while, watching Diddy until she lost sight of him, while smiling and even emitting a sigh before closing it. But then, she turned and gave herself a little scare when she realized that Tiny, Kiddy and Chunky had been staring at her and smiling at her quite suspiciously.

"Oh, no! You guys again!" Dixie exclaimed, slapping her forehead. "You're going to get started."

"Did you see? You stare at him until the end," Tiny said with a mocking smile and giving her little pushing.

"Oh, admit it, Dixie," Chunky asked, arms crossed and his eyes raised. "Has Diddy been getting your attention?"

Dixie was only silent for a few seconds, while she couldn't help but blush when they asked that question.

"Uhh, well," Dixie replied, smiling with some nerves. She remained quiet for a while and stared down at the ground while her sister and cousins continued to look at her suspiciously. "You see... It's just that..."

"Tell us!" Tiny replied, giving her another little push. "Or are you going to tell us again that you were now looking at the trees?"

"If we saw you *clearly*," Chunky added in the same way. "You can't hide anything from us."

"Oh, okay, okay!" exclaimed Dixie, calming them down and trying to calm herself. "You see, the truth is... *I guess so.*"

Immediately, the three of them changed their faces little by little, and then they were excited at Dixie's response.

"I knew it! I knew it!" Tiny exclaimed, jokingly shoving her sister along with Kiddy.

"Wow! So, it's been true, huh?" Chunky added in the same way. "And since when has Diddy been... *getting your attention*, huh?"

"Well... I don't think for long," Dixie replied with a little laugh as she blushed intensely. "But what can I tell you... I admit... Is that what you wanted to hear?"

"And do you like him too much, but too much?" Tiny asked rather curiously.

"Well, the truth is that he is a very cute monkey and has a nice way of being, from what I have seen," Dixie added with some shyness and a few small laughs.

"That's more than clear," Tiny said, nodding and paused before continuing. "Why don't you ask him for a date or something?"

"W-what?! Are you crazy?!" exclaimed Dixie, instantly confused. "I wouldn't do that, it would be... *strange.*"

"Hey, yes! That would be a good idea," Chunky added with some excitement. "Hang out the two of you alone, where you no longer talk about schoolwork or anything like that, but... *of you*. So that you become close friends."

"But how am I going to do that?! How do I tell him?" Dixie asked, still confused. "I-I mean... how could I tell him to hang out?"

Dixie had no idea how to do it; that had never crossed her mind and she had never had a situation like that.

"Just tell him!" Chunky replied.

"But don't say to him: 'Do you want to date me?' But something like: 'Can we go out somewhere?', so it won't sound so direct. Don't be that fast either."

"When you see him at school, you can tell him," Chunky suggested. "Or else, in a while when we meet with the other kongs."

"And that... would be a good idea?" Dixie asked with a look of strangeness.

"Yes, I'm sure he'll say yes; you two have become good friends," Tiny said, smiling excitedly. "Come on, Dixie, it will only be a friend outing, just like we have all done together, only this time it will be *just the two of you*."

"Yes, I bet it will turn out well and you will get to know each other better," Chunky added in the same way. "Go, see what happens."

Dixie wasn't sure what Tiny and Chunky were telling her... But at the same time, she thought that maybe she would lose nothing by trying. After all, Diddy had become somewhat closer to her in recent weeks, so she wanted to think that it wouldn't be so complicated to receive a positive response from him.

On a weekend night, there were Donkey, Candy, Diddy, and Funky gathered at a table outside the latter's house. Diddy was sitting reading a magazine, while Donkey and Candy were saying their love things to each other and getting affectionate, as was usual when they saw each other.

"My precious Candy," Donkey said, hugging her.

"Oh, my Donkey Kong," Candy replied tenderly.

"You're the most beautiful girl, you're the loveliest one I've ever seen," he said as he hugged her and gave her a few kisses.

"*Oh, no*," Diddy exclaimed quietly, covering his eyes at such a love scene.

Donkey and Candy continued to express themselves with loving gestures, which gave Diddy some grace, but at the same time, as if he got tired of seeing so many love scenarios near him.

"Would you like to be like that with Dixie too, brother?" Funky whispered, giving him a scare and a little push. "Hmm, so with Dixie, right?"

"W-what?!" Diddy exclaimed, looking at him strangely. "No, of course not!"

"Oh, yes, of course, of course," Donkey interrupted in a mischievous tone, joining in annoying him.

"No, what are you talking about?!" replied Diddy struggling not to blush noticeably.

"*That face*, Diddy," Funky pointed out with a playful tone. "It seems to me that here we could have a new couple, right?"

"You're going to start!" Diddy said, dropping his head against the table.

"Who knows, brother, I'm just saying," Funky added with a few small laughs, to which Donkey and Candy also did the same. "Hey, I'll be right back; I'm going to continue adjusting a little bit the airship I was repairing this morning."

Funky retired for a while, while Donkey and Candy continued in the same place along with Diddy... to whom they kept giving glances with playful smiles.

"So, there's *a certain matter* with Dixie, isn't there, Diddy?" said Candy in the same tone.

"Uhh, n-no, that's not what you think," Diddy replied, trying to sound true.

"Wait a minute, and what are you reading?" Donkey asked, taking the magazine Diddy had in his hands. Afterwards, he gave a small laugh when he saw what Diddy was reading. "Hmm, 'Is this love.'"

Immediately, Diddy opened his eyes to the fullest upon hearing Donkey utter the title of the article he was reading.

"N-no... I wasn't reading that!" Diddy exclaimed quickly, closing the magazine immediately.

Donkey and Candy laughed a little at Diddy's reaction.

"Tell the truth, little buddy," Donkey said, giving him a little push. "Does Dixie catch your attention or something?"

The two stared at Diddy with a playful smile waiting for him to admit it, to which he looked at them seriously and not knowing what to answer.

"Well... I think so," Diddy replied, scratching his head. "*I guess*," he added, smiling nervously.

"That's more than clear," Donkey said with a small laugh. "Hey, but don't worry, we won't say anything to Dixie; we promise... By the way, haven't you thought about taking some first steps with her?"

"Huh? And what am I supposed to do?" Diddy asked, confused and looking at them strangely, before being a little nervous at what he said. "Oh, I meant... should I do anything about it?"

"Well, first you have to become good friends, of course," Donkey added. "I mean, you're friends now, aren't you? But you also need to be much more."

"And since when do you like her, Diddy?" Candy asked.

"Well... I don't know," Diddy replied pensively, since he really didn't know since when he was feeling that way; it was as if, without realizing it, he already *had a crush on*. "Maybe a few days or weeks ago."

"And do you feel those nerves when you are with her?" Donkey began to ask. "And have you been thinking about her all day? And does any love situation remind you of her?"

Diddy thought about it for a few seconds before Donkey's questions... And he realized that he had an affirmative answer to all of them.

"Well... Yes... all that," Diddy replied, smiling with some embarrassment.

"It's normal at first," Donkey said with a shrug. "You start to see that girl much more than a friend, you get nervous when you have contact with her and out of nowhere you smile when you remember her, look at her or spend time with her."

As Donkey continued to speak, Diddy kept looking away after realizing that that was the same thing that had been happening to him during the previous days.

"Hey, but don't worry, that can happen to anyone," Donkey said with a little laugh. "Just look at me and Candy... But sure, *that* feeling is something you should know how to carry," he added, pointing to him. "Do you think about taking a step with Dixie?"

"Well, I don't know," Diddy replied, smiling with some confusion. "I-I mean... It could be, but... Oh, I don't know what to do," he added, crossing his arms. "And what could I do?"

Donkey watched Diddy carefully. He realized that his little nephew had come to him for the first time in his life with that famous feeling and, therefore, he knew that the time had come when he should give him a few tips in time, and that seemed to be a good time to do it.

"Well, you'll see, little buddy, I know what's happening to you. But first of all, there are some things you need to know, *and it's very important* that you know them now and have it *well recorded*," Donkey said as he got ready to talk to Diddy. "First of all, you would need to know much more about her and see how her way of being is, her way of thinking and even any defect she has. If after that you still feel the same or much more, that's when you can be sure that you are really... *in love*."

"Also, you should know that *not everything* will always be perfect," Candy added. "You must be very careful about the high expectations you are going to think about her."

"That's right, little buddy, and this is *very* important: never, but *never* "put her on a pedestal" or think all the time that she is the most wonderful thing there is; just think that Dixie is a living thing like you, and at the same time, she may not be *like you* in some aspects. Yes... maybe that sounds weird to you, but just as love is a wonderful thing, any disappointment hurts, and *it hurts a lot*, and not everything always goes exactly as you expect at first. That's why you should take the time to get to know her well."

Diddy was more confused now; he had never understood or heard deeply about love situations.

"And how am I supposed to get to know her even more?" Diddy asked, still confused.

"Well, you could ask her out," Donkey replied. "That is, don't say to her 'Do you want to date me?', but something like 'Could we go out somewhere?' That way it won't sound so direct."

"Exactly," Candy continued. "It's not a hang out in plan *to date*, but something rather friendly, as you hang out with her and her family, only in this case it would be only with her."

"But there's another detail," said Diddy, even more confused. "I have no idea how to conquer someone, I don't know how to be... '*romantic*' or anything like that."

Donkey smiled somewhat tenderly at Diddy before continuing.

"No, don't worry about that, little buddy, believe me. Look, just remember this: don't forget to *be yourself*; never, but never change or force yourself to be someone you're not to impress her; *never* do that; this is not for you to treat yourself badly."

"Just... be myself?" Diddy asked, still confused.

"That's right, and believe it: if something were to happen between the two of you, that would be the best way to see if she really loves you: for how you are, for being just yourself... Of course, as long as you remain the good monkey that you are. And likewise, you must allow her to also show herself as she is."

"By the way, how about inviting her one of these days or after school?" Candy suggested.

"B-but how do I do that?" Diddy asked, getting a little nervous just thinking about it.

"Just tell her," Donkey replied. "But you know, it would be an outing only of *friends*, you're not going to be so fast and direct so soon. That's also important: you should *always* respect her *boundaries* and her decisions, just as she should also do the same with you."

Suddenly, Diddy tried to process everything Donkey told him... And he realized it made sense. But what he wasn't quite sure about was being able to invite only Dixie out. He had previously hung out with Dixie along with Kiddy, Chunky and Tiny as a group, but never alone with Dixie. Even so... he wanted to know what would happen if he tried.

Chapter 11: Friendly Date

Chapter Notes

This chapter will be longer.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

The next day, in the middle of the afternoon, Diddy had decided to ask Dixie to hang out after listening to Donkey's advice. Obviously, he was very nervous, as he had never asked a girl out; he had always witnessed the things Donkey did for Candy since they started dating, but he never thought that later he could be in such a situation. Anyway, he was a little reassured to know that it would only be a friendly walk like any other.

"Very well, little buddy, remember all the advice, don't get nervous and act natural," Donkey advised him when Diddy was about to leave the house. "And above all, make sure you make her smile and treat her well."

"Okay... Thank you, Donkey," Diddy replied, smiling nervously and scratching his head. "But one question... And where can I invite her?"

"Wherever you want, there are many options," Donkey replied, patting him lightly on the back. "It's just an outing of friends, it's for you to spend some time together as you have already done."

"W-well... Let's see what I can come up with," Diddy replied with a few small laughs.

"Well, now go, little buddy," Donkey said, patting him on the head again. "Good luck."

Then, Diddy came down from the house and started heading towards his friends' house. Truth be told, he was a little nervous; while he had already gone to see Dixie at her house, he had never hung out alone with her. Still, deep down he did hope to make it.

Diddy arrived at Dixie's house and knocked on the door... By the way, Dixie also planned to ask him out, although not at that precise moment.

The door opened, and Diddy could clearly feel all the nerves running through him suddenly that he almost forgot what he had to say to Dixie.

"Diddy!" she exclaimed, showing surprise at his unexpected visit.

"H-hi, Dixie! How are you?" Diddy said, trying to act natural.

"Very well. And what are you doing around here?" she asked him curiously.

"Well..." Diddy was starting to get nervous again, but he was trying to hold on. "It's just... I wanted to ask you something."

Hearing that, Dixie remembered what her sister and cousins told her, so she thought that might be a good time... Even the same idea crossed her mind.

"Uhh... Hey, Diddy, since you're here... I was going to tell you something too," she said with a somewhat nervous smile as well.

At the same time, Diddy was also astonished at what Dixie had just said.

"Really?" Diddy replied with a curious look. "Well... Tell me first."

"You see, it's that I..." Dixie pronounced, looking away. "Uh, what if you tell me first?"

"Uhh, well, I was going to ask you if..." Diddy began to stutter a little, but he was still struggling to look confident, "If you wanted to go somewhere today."

Instantly, Dixie was surprised to see that it was the same, but still, she tried to hide it.

"Just you and me?" Dixie asked on impulse, but then realized what she said. "Oh, I mean... really?" she added with a forced smile.

"Yes, that... Of course, if you want," Diddy replied with the same expression. "And what were you going to tell me, by the way?"

Dixie looked away quickly as she thought about whether to tell him it was the same or make up another excuse... Still, they didn't want to create the expectation that *they meant* the same thing about *dating*.

"Well, the truth is... I was going to tell you the same thing," Dixie told him, trying to smile normally. "If we can go somewhere, of course, if you want too."

Diddy felt a slight quickening in his heartbeat upon hearing that; he couldn't imagine that coincidence. But anyway, he didn't want to create great expectations at that time either.

"Ahh, really?" Diddy stuttered a little. "Hey, it must have been a coincidence," he added more confidently.

"Yes... it's true," Dixie replied with a small laugh. "And well... where do you want to go?" she asked, trying not to generate more tension.

"Well... Uhh... I don't know... My house?" Diddy suggested without knowing which place to really choose, but then he realized that he should not have answered like that.

"I want to go!" Tiny, Kiddy and Chunky suddenly appeared.

"Hey, what were you doing here?!" Dixie asked them, looking at them strangely.

Apparently, the three kongs had been keeping an eye on Dixie's interaction with Diddy.

"Oh, hi. How are you, friends?" Diddy said, greeting the three of them.

"How so around here, Diddy?" Tiny said with emotion. "Are you going to your house? We want to go too."

"Yes, we've never been to your house, Diddy," Chunky added likewise. "Let's go, we want to go!"

"W-Well, but it is that..." Diddy stammered at the unforeseen.

"Please! We want to know your house," Tiny insisted with a look of pleading.

"Come on!" Kiddy added the same look.

At first, Diddy felt somewhat clumsy that he had mentioned his house as the destination of an outing with Dixie and, secondly, he didn't know how to tell the other three that he was only hanging out specifically with Dixie without them going to interpret it in another way.

"Well... Okay, okay," Diddy replied, smiling with some insecurity when he saw that the plan was not going as expected. "Right now, I'll take you. Let's go."

"*Yeah!*" exclaimed Tiny, Kiddy and Chunky... except for Dixie, who only smiled forcibly when she also saw that it was not what she had planned in mind.

Diddy entered his house later with a sneaky expression of frustration, not knowing what to do now and with his four friends accompanying him. Donkey, seeing him arrive, was surprised that his little nephew had returned so soon.

"Diddy! What happened?" Donkey asked, getting up from the couch. "How did it go?"

"Well, you'll see..." Diddy replied with a forced smile and scratching his head. "Let's say-"

"Wow, is this your house?!" Chunky exclaimed, appearing with the other three kongs inside the house.

"Hi, Donkey!" said the four young kongs.

"*Say what?*" Donkey whispered in shock at the visitor, but concealed it anyway. "Oh, hi, kids! How so around here?"

"Diddy invited us here," Tiny replied smiling. "He said he wanted to bring us to his house."

"*Tiny,*" Dixie whispered, elbowing her lightly.

"Oh, how friendly my little nephew is!" Donkey said with a forced smile and looking sideways at Diddy. "And well, no problem, you are welcome here."

"Wow, your house is great," Chunky said, looking in amazement. "Chunky likes it."

"Oh, I thank you," Donkey replied, smiling as he made his way to Diddy. "Well, and I'm sorry to interrupt you, but can you wait a moment?... Hey, Diddy, could you come over for a while to help me with something?" he added, winking with some seriousness.

"Uh, yes, okay," Diddy replied, imagining that Donkey had already noticed the failed plan. "I'll be right back, friends."

Donkey took Diddy to his room to ask him what the whole situation was that had been put together at that moment.

"Can you tell what you did? It was *just the two of you* that were supposed to go out."

"You see, I didn't know which place to choose," Diddy said with a shrug, "so, I said 'my house' and the other three listened. I couldn't tell them no, then I would give myself away."

On the other hand, Dixie also talked to her sister and cousins... as she was also frustrated at the ill-fated initial plan.

"Hey, this was supposed to be the outing with Diddy," Dixie exclaimed quietly.

"What? Seriously now?" Tiny asked in confusion. "And why didn't you tell us before?"

"Didn't we tell you to tell him at school?" Chunky whispered, frowning.

"Yes, but he came to our house unexpectedly and I couldn't pass up the opportunity, and you guys went out!" Dixie replied with a slap on the forehead.

Meanwhile, on Donkey and Diddy's side...

"Look, this is what we're going to do," Donkey said to Diddy. "You go talk to Dixie and invite her again, and meanwhile, I distract the other three until they forget about her."

On Dixie and her family's side...

"You invite Diddy again," Tiny proposed to her sister. "And then, we'll distract Donkey until he forgets about Diddy."

Then, Donkey and Diddy left the room. Donkey sneaked signals to Diddy, while the other young kongs gave Dixie signals.

"Hey, Donkey," Chunky took the first step to try to distract Donkey. "Uhh, what does a gorilla say to an orangut-"

"Hey, little friends, do you know why a coconut has water inside?" Donkey hastened to say to distract them too.

Both groups began asking questions or mentioning meaningless data, in order to divert attention.

For their part, Diddy and Dixie went as planned and met again the two of them.

"Uhh, hey, Dixie," Diddy said with a little of nerves. "By chance... Do you want to go outside for a while?"

"I was going to tell you the same... Uh, I meant, of course, let's go!" Dixie replied in kind.

Donkey stayed with the other three young kongs, where everyone was trying to distract themselves, so Diddy and Dixie could hang out in peace. According to them, none of them realized that their plan was going well this time.

On the other side, both little kongs went out, got down from the treehouse and started walking aimlessly. At first, they didn't know what to say on the way, but then they were talking and joking for a long time until communication became normal.

"And why is it that a coconut has water inside?" Dixie asked with a small laugh.

"Do you remember Wrinkly's lecture on nutrient uptake in plants?"

"Wow, it makes more sense. I thought it was because of the rain."

"How is the water going to enter like this?" Diddy said the same way.

Both of them continued to walk aimlessly. Diddy felt at ease around Dixie's side and, apparently, he didn't feel so nervous anymore after continuing to engage in conversation. However, he didn't yet know where to take her, but they both enjoyed each other's company anyway.

Later, they had grown tired of walking, so they went to sit under a tree on a hill. Apparently, the plan was already going well as they wanted at first.

"It's a pretty quiet place here," Dixie said, smiling and looking out at the surroundings.

"That's true," Diddy replied, now thinking about what to talk about with Dixie. Suddenly, it occurred to him to ask her something. "Hey, Dixie... and... what do you like to do frequently? I mean, when there's nothing else to do."

"Me? Well... It's been a long time since I have been able to dedicate myself to the things I like, but... I used to play guitar since I was a little child and I loved to do it almost daily. Even so, I hope to be able to resume it soon."

"Wow, I always wanted to learn to play guitar," Diddy said. "That is, it's not that I want so much, but it has caught my attention."

"It's quite complex at first, but with a lot of practice you can get used to it," Dixie replied smiling. "And what do you like to do? Do you also like music?"

"Absolutely. In fact, almost everyone here likes it. I, on the other hand, really like to sing or play the bongos. Oh, and above all, I like racing cars too; someday I would like to be in a competition... And what else do you like?"

"Well... the bubblegums, I guess," she replied with a small laugh. "I also like crabs and lobsters."

"To eat them?" Diddy exclaimed, looking at her with some oddity.

"Oh, no, of course not," Dixie replied, smiling with a look of strangeness. "It's just that I find them super adorable; someday I would like to adopt one... Hey, and you really like adventures, right?"

"I love them, especially those that are to look for some treasure or recover something, such as the banana reserve. Do you also like adventures?"

"Of course, I love adventures, even if they are also tiring, and as long as we are not with our lives at risk, of course."

"Wow, now I see how you could fight against those fools at school. You know how to defend yourself very well, how did you learn?"

"That's how I told you: my parents and uncles taught me some defense techniques... Even... as a result of what happened to them, I had to learn to apply them more."

"They've been able to do it very well from what I see," Diddy said, smiling with admiration. "Hey, and... Can I ask you... what happened to your parents?"

Dixie, after having a smile on her face, immediately got a sad expression at Diddy's sudden question.

"Oh, no. Sorry, Dixie... I shouldn't have asked you that," he said quickly, apologizing for the imprudence in noticing it. "That is, sometimes I forget for a moment that I shouldn't ask you something--"

"No, don't apologize," Dixie said with a short, weak smile, before turning serious. "I can tell you if you want... You must have had that doubt since we came to this island, right?"

"Are you sure?" Diddy asked with some insecurity.

"Yes, but you'll see... it's a long story," Dixie replied with absolute seriousness.

"Okay, if you say so. I'll listen to you..."

Dixie got ready to tell her story, which was not happy at all, and was shown as if she was trying to be as strong as she could to speak it.

"Well..." Dixie said with a lowered gaze. "We were a happy family: Chunky and Kiddy's family with mine and Tiny were always very close. On weekends we used to go for walks all together."

On a day like any other, we went for a walk near a cliff. It was a family picnic day... Although today I wish that day had never happened.

"Ahh, nothing like a nice family day," said Dixie's father as the family was sharing and preparing various things.

"And above all, how nice it's to have a new member in the family," added Chunky's father in reference to Kiddy, who was only a short time old.

"Can we play with him, auntie?" Tiny and Dixie asked Chunky and Kiddy's mother.

"Not yet, little ones, wait until he grows up," she replied, smiling at them as she held Kiddy.

Then Tiny and I went to another corner nearby. We were quietly playing both... When suddenly, a type of car arrived where five strangers were on board. I had never seen ones of that species in our territory: they were people and they were dressed in colorful costumes as if they were partying. Then, they got off and approached us.

"Look, they're two cute little chimpanzees," one of these men said cheerfully before pulling out some candy for Dixie and Tiny. "Do you want candies, little ones?"

We stared at them strangely for a few seconds, but in our naivety at the time, we took those sweets they offered us.

"Who are these ones?" Tiny asked in a kong language, which the men didn't understand.

"I don't know, but... they look friendly, I think," Dixie replied calmly.

"We want to be your friends," the human men told them before handing them more things. "We have brought food and gifts for you. Have it, little ones!"

They took some toys out of the car and gave them to Tiny and me. Then, they gave us a bunch of fruits to eat, and later, they brought out party balloons for us.

They spent some time playing with us, took pictures of us and kept giving us more food. Apparently, they just wanted to meet us, even though they didn't speak our language.

Everything was going well until... suddenly, they took us all together and forcibly locked us both in a cage.

"*HELP!*" heartbreaking screams were heard from Dixie and Tiny, which reached the ears of the adult apes in the family.

Those cursed ones caught Tiny and me and put us in the car. Chunky and his parents came to try to help us, but those men threw a liquid at them that immediately knocked them to the ground, and then they took Kiddy too and locked him up with us.

"*CHILDREN!*" Dixie's parents exclaimed as they began to sprint after the little kongs. They were still standing. "*FEAR NOT, WE ARE COMING FOR YOU!*"

Then the car accelerated, and those hunters were taking us while our parents ran for us, until they managed to get into the car to try to rescue us. The road was very dangerous, as next to it there was a huge abyss.

"*Don't worry, kids, here we are!*" Dixie's mother exclaimed, struggling with the cage where Dixie, Tiny and Kiddy were being carried.

"Oh, blast! We don't spray those apes with sedatives!" the driver of the car exclaimed when he noticed the presence of the adult apes in the car. "And we don't have any more!"

"I'll take care of it!" said another of the men pulling out a gun.

The man leaned out of the car window and pointed at Dixie and Tiny's parents and, before long... he pressed the trigger.

Dixie's parents rolled on the floor, but luckily, they had managed to lower the cage of the car where the kong children were locked. Both apes had been badly wounded by the gunfire, but they were trying to stay strong. Dixie and Tiny managed to get out of the cage and tried to lift Kiddy, while their parents were a long distance from them.

The hunting men, losing the little prisoners, stopped. But immediately, they turned around in the car and sped up to pick them up again. Dixie's father, with a lot of weakness, but at the same time with some strength, refused to allow his daughters and nephew to be taken, so he tried to gather strength and headed towards the car that was coming in the direction of the children.

Dixie's father got into the car and entered the cockpit to take the wheel and try to divert them. The human men tried to push him away, but he resisted. Finally, Dixie's father managed to send the car with the men on board into the abyss on the sides, but unfortunately... he also fell with them.

"Nooo!" Dixie and Tiny shouted in extreme despair after seeing the event.

Tiny stayed with Kiddy and Mom who was very badly injured, while I ran to where Chunky was with my aunt and uncle, but they were still asleep.

"Chunky, Chunky, wake up, help me, please!" Dixie exclaimed too desperately as she moved Chunky hard. "Auntie, uncle, please wake up!"

"What... What... Happened?" Chunky asked weakly and confused.

"You have to come, those people wanted to take us, they shot Mom, and Dad fell down with them!" Dixie said, all desperate and wishing it was all a nightmare, while several tears were coming out of her eyes.

"NO! It can't be!" Chunky exclaimed, reacting all in horror.

Chunky and Dixie proceeded to go for Dixie's father. They went down a long way to the exact spot where the now-crashed car was, so they could help Dixie's father.

At the scene of the accident, there was the destroyed car of the hunters. In the distance, the group of those human ones could be seen: two of them were unharmed; another of them appeared to have severely injured his leg; while the remaining two were motionless in their entirety.

We managed to rescue Dad at that time, he was more injured than he already was and we took him home along with Mom.

At night some medical apes tried to save them, but... it was too late, and... we only had to see them close their eyes for the last time... I could barely say goodbye to them at the end...

"And that's what happened," Dixie finished with tears in her eyes and trying to dry them. That was a very difficult story for her to tell; she still remembered everything clearly and it hurt her too much. That was one of the hardest events she had ever experienced.

Diddy couldn't help but feel very sorry for Dixie, he was even starting to feel somewhat guilty for having made her remember all that tragedy.

"And that's not all," Dixie said, trying to calm herself still with tears in her eyes. "My aunt and uncle... then also..."

"Oh, no, Dixie," Diddy said, trying to reassure her. "If you want not to-"

"No, I can tell you. In fact, this time they were... those evil apes who were chasing us when we got here..."

"Oh, no. And what did they do?" Diddy asked, looking worried.

"Well," Dixie began to tell, her eyes moistened. "After my parents were no longer with us, my aunt and uncle, Chunky and Kiddy's parents, adopted Tiny and me as their daughters..."

They were like our second parents; they were just as attentive to us and we came to love them too much. And of course, Chunky and Kiddy became like our brothers. Things were a little better again, even if it wasn't the same for both of us.

Until that other terrible day came. We were all in our house: my aunt, my uncle, my cousins, my sister and I when someone broke down the door; they were those apes!

"No one moves!" a group of mandrills and orangutans appeared, all with guns in hand.

"Say what?!" Chunky's father exclaimed, frightened instantly. "Who are you?!"

Those apes, without answering us, shot a kind of darts at us, and suddenly we fell to the ground without being able to move. Then they kidnapped us, and outside the house we saw a bunch of other apes who were kidnapping whole families.

They took us in some boats to another island, in which... those apes had an organization that captured animals of different species. When we got there, they took us into a very strange building and locked us in a cell, where on the sides there were more animals locked up in piles like in a prison. They had us there for a long time where sometimes they left us whole days without eating.

Those apes were an army of different races, but the leaders were five: the three mandrills and two orangutans, they shot mercilessly at anyone who tried to escape from there and committed horrible atrocities. Every so often, they randomly picked a group of imprisoned animals and exterminated them! Even... there were rumors that they experimented on them and took them somewhere else, although we never knew where or why they did all that, they also took live animals sometimes. And when they returned from their travels, they always came back with new animals to lock them up.

Until one day, when one of the apes was going to give us food through the bars of the cell, Chunky's father imprisoned him against the bars and managed to take his keys, and then we left... and we released the rest of the animals. The adult prisoners took the weapons of the apes and clashed against that entire organization. The little ones were only left in a room until everything passed, in order to protect us.

The conflict lasted until the whole army was wiped out, and when it was over, we got back together with my aunt and uncle, and all the prisoners were going to escape.

We all headed towards the water's edge, put together some fast boats and some animals managed to escape, but... we didn't reach.

Unfortunately, the leading apes had been unharmed and appeared to us by surprise. They were very furious that we had released their entire herd of victims, and then, with weapons in hand, they took us back to the building to exterminate us.

They had us all tied up, but the apes were still preparing their extermination teams. In their carelessness, Chunky's parents were strong enough to untie themselves and then untied us. We ran away immediately, although the apes managed to see us and went after us.

"DON'T LET THEM ESCAPE!" exclaimed one of the mandrills, and the rest of the evil apes began to chase them.

We ran through almost the entire building as fast as possible, until we found a shortcut where only the little ones could fit.

"Kids, over here, hurry up!" Chunky and Kiddy's mother exclaimed. "Enter here!"

The shortcut was a small long-running pipeline. The evil apes were nowhere in sight, so Dixie, Tiny and Kiddy went into the tunnel so they could hide.

"Try to get out here, kids!" Chunky and Kiddy's father told them. "At the end of this pipeline they will be able to leave this place completely."

"But what about you?" Dixie asked, worried about her aunt, uncle and Chunky.

"We'll walk out the front door, we'll meet outside," Chunky's mother replied. "Now save yourselves, please!"

"*THERE THEY ARE!*" the evil apes appeared and began to go after them.

"*Hurry up, children, run to the exit!*" Chunky's father whispered quickly before continuing to flee with his wife and son Chunky.

And that... was the last time we saw them.

Tiny, Kiddy and I did as we were told, we moved all over the pipeline until we reached the end and left the building. Immediately, we went to hide among the trees and waited for my aunt, uncle and Chunky to come out... When suddenly, we only heard a few shots inside the building. We were very scared and worried, until we saw the front door open, we saw Chunky leave and he met us again but... he just burst into tears and, from the desperate way he spoke to us, we knew what had happened.

Then we escaped and, to our bad luck, those apes found us and started chasing us. We reached the sea and swam to another island as fast as we could. But those apes didn't want to give up; they were chasing us for a long time and we just had to be very attentive and know how to hide. We went from island to island looking for somewhere safe... And that's how we survived for a few months...

"And that's it..." said Dixie, who at the end, could not help but shed her tears and burst into tears, trying to continue. "I've tried to be strong... But I would do anything to see them all again... and be all together in the family."

"Oh, Dixie," Diddy placed a hand on her shoulder; even he felt a slight urge to cry upon hearing those sad stories. He didn't know the cruel reality that Dixie, Tiny, Kiddy and Chunky had experienced. "I'm really sorry, Dixie... I didn't want you to remember all that and-"

"It's okay," Dixie added, trying to calm down and wipe away tears. "Anyway, you had to know to see how we got to this island."

"No, no, seriously, excuse me, I think I was very reckless," Diddy insisted, still trying to calm Dixie before there was a moment of silence. "Do you want me to give you a hug?"

Dixie, with her gaze lowered and tears welling up in her eyes, nodded. Then, Diddy hugged her for a few seconds. He felt terrible to have asked her that at first, because he never wanted to remind her of something as terrible as what she had just told. Seconds later, the two broke away from the embrace and stood for a while in silence as Dixie finished wiping away tears.

"And well, then... did those apes continue to follow you?" Diddy asked with some insecurity.

"Yes, on no island did we find peace and we had to survive. And if it wasn't those cursed apes, we also had to run away from cannibal apes that came our way. Do you remember Chunky mentioned cannibals, right?"

"I see... And then, how did you land here?"

"On the last island we were on, we couldn't escape anymore and we were caught by the three mandrills, but luckily we made it later, and we used their cannons to make them lose sight of us. We launched aimlessly... And that's how we got here," she concluded, wiping away tears.

"Wow... now I understand everything," Diddy added in a low tone.

"And the rest you know, then they caught us and were going to shoot us, but you defeated them," Dixie added, smiling a little. "You finished saving us, Diddy."

Diddy, seeing Dixie smile even a little, returned the same gesture. After all, he realized that, in the midst of all that tragedy, he had been a luck for the four of them to save them from a powerful and dangerous group of cruel apes.

"You know," Diddy later told her, "Donkey told me that when someone leaves forever, wherever they went, they could still be taking care of their living loved ones. Well... it's true that you will no longer be able to see it, but... someones say you can feel it through anything nice that happens to you."

"Do you think so?" Dixie asked, her eyes still lowered.

"Well, it's... what Donkey has said to me, perhaps to comfort me when I've also been sad about what happened to my parents."

Dixie couldn't say anything more, and only stood for a few seconds pondering what Diddy had just said.

"Diddy..." Dixie suddenly tried to ask him the same question as well. "You don't have your parents either, do you?"

"Well..." Diddy replied with a low look.

"Oh, I'm sorry, if you don't want-" Dixie, likewise, didn't mean to be reckless either.

"No, don't worry; if you told me your story, I could tell you mine too... Although I don't remember it very well; I was very young. Donkey told me that at that time there was a war between kremlings and kongs, and well... my parents were victims of that," Diddy said before looking down with tears in his eyes. "I remember when I was a little child, I wanted to see my parents again and I asked Donkey a lot about them. In my innocence, I thought that they had only gone for a walk to hide from those kremlings and that they would soon return home... Until when I got a little older,

Donkey told me the whole truth... It was terrible for me, and I spent several months not wanting to do anything, while Donkey tried to cope with the situation with me.”

In the same way, Dixie took great pity on Diddy. Her case had been very tragic, but to hear that Diddy didn’t live so long with his parents and didn’t know of their whereabouts until later, was something she could not imagine.

"Oh, no. Really, I'm so sorry too, Diddy," Dixie replied, putting her hand on Diddy's shoulder. “And then, that's when Donkey adopted you, right?”

"Yes, he has been like a father to me, although many times like an older brother.”

"Well, you can see that he has been a good figure for you, I see that he loves you very much and cares about you.”

"You're right, Donkey is great," Diddy said again, smiling a little, but then sighed and looked serious. “Even so... I've always wondered... what would it be like if my parents lived? What would it be like to have the whole family and have seen them for so much longer?”

"Having them was a wonderful thing, it was wonderful for me," Dixie said, before lowering her head sadly. “But... I don't know why all that had to happen, and I feel like... nothing was ever the same from there.”

"I know... It's horrible," Diddy added in the same way. “And it's still terrible to remember when Donkey told me that.”

Both were left with the same muffled expressions while each finished processing their bad memories of those terrible experiences they had had.

"But still," Dixie said later, “since we came to this island, I think... we smiled again... even a little," she added with a small smile.

Diddy continued to look at her in a pity way for a couple of seconds, although he felt somewhat better with those last words of Dixie.

"That sounds good, after all that you told me," he replied, smiling a little. “By the way, in your case, is Chunky the one who takes care of you?”

"Actually, I've had to be like the older sister of all of them; Chunky is sometimes a little immature and nervous," Dixie replied with a small smile.

There was another moment of silence as Diddy looked at Dixie. He felt very sorry for her stories, as he didn’t imagine that they would be so tragic. He didn't like to see her sad at all although he also felt that way after remembering his own situation. Suddenly, he remembered the plan they were in and what Donkey advised him for the date: make her smile; after all, it had started as a happy date, so he decided to cheer her up a bit.

"Uhh, Dixie... Do you want to go for a walk somewhere nearby? There is a place that you will surely like... Do you feel good to go now?”

"Oh, why not? Come on, it would be fun," Dixie replied again, smiling a little more. “Uhh, but, Diddy...”

"Yeah?"

"Haven't the wounds in your eye and head healed yet?" she asked, pointing to Diddy who, by the way, still occasionally carried the bandages of the last beatings he had had.

"I don't know, they don't seem to hurt anymore," he said, putting his hand to his temple.

"Let me take them off for you."

Dixie removed Diddy's bandages and put his cap back on. In short, he was healed and finally his two eyes could be seen. Dixie stared at him for a few seconds, and then gave a few small laughs.

"What?" Diddy asked in confusion.

"Uh, nothing... Let's go! I want to know that place," Dixie replied, trying not to blush after looking at Diddy.

The pair of little kongs headed towards the place that Diddy wanted to show Dixie. They climbed to the top of a cliff, from where it could see a river with waterfalls and, apart from that, it had a rushing descent in the form of a slide where water ran down into the huge river. It was a perfect place with a nice view so that some little apes could recreate.

"It's impressive!" Dixie said, fascinated with the scenery. "It seems that we had never come here."

"Come, do you want to go down here?" Diddy said, heading down the slide-like descent.

"Uh, are you sure this is heading towards the river?" Dixie replied, hesitantly on the verge of the descent.

"Of course, let's go!" Diddy reaffirmed, taking her arm. "It's fun, just throw yourself."

Diddy, not giving Dixie any more time to think, pushed her down the slide.

"*Diddy!*" Dixie shouted as she descended.

Then, Diddy launched as well. There was a great height from the end of the descent to the surface of the river, so Dixie turned her hair to descend slowly, but Diddy, reaching her, took her arm and they both fell quickly into the river.

"Why did you do that?!" Dixie exclaimed annoyedly as she came to the surface of the water.

"Did you see? I told you it was going to be a lot of fun," Diddy replied with a laugh. Then, Dixie splashed water on his face. "Woah! It seems that someone got angry."

Diddy followed the game and both began to splash water and play under it while laughing.

Later, both surfaced and ran to another cliff, where this time, there was an aerial transporter made of lianas and wood that moved over the wide river at high altitude.

"We had built this with Funky," Diddy said, pointing to the conveyor. "Come, let's get on!"

Then, both kongs got on and the transporter started working. From the height, they could see the river and the whole landscape. Dixie kept admiring the whole environment where they were.

"Hey, what if we jump in from here?" Diddy suggested playfully, pointing down.

"You're crazy!" Dixie exclaimed.

"Come on!" he said as took her by the arm, about to throw her again. "It's going to be very fun-"

But this time, Dixie took his other arm and pushed him first into the river and, after letting out a few laughs at the play she made of him, she also jumped in. They both fell and, this time, Dixie was laughing while now Diddy was looking at her in annoyance.

"I call that: *revenge*," Dixie said in a mischievous tone as she looked at Diddy's defeated face.

Then Diddy smiled playfully at her and they started playing and splashing in the water again... But they were so distracted that they didn't realize the current was directing them toward a waterfall.

"Uh, hey, Diddy... did you see that?" Dixie pointed toward the high abyss of the waterfall.

"Oh, no! Let's get out, fast!" Diddy exclaimed, taking Dixie's arm.

The Kongs tried to swim towards the shore, but the current was very strong and it was difficult for them to move well. They didn't reach and, seconds later, the waterfall dragged them and took them away. They both fell through the entire waterfall while screaming in despair. When they fell, they immediately swam under the water towards the shore until they managed to get out, all exhausted and at the same time happy to stay unscathed.

"Why didn't you use your hair to fall out?" Diddy asked, exhausted.

"Because this time I wanted to feel the adrenaline," Dixie replied cheerfully.

"Well, do you see that tall tree over there?" Diddy pointed out.

"Yes, why?"

"Well, you don't win me to get there!" he replied defiantly, before running to the appointed place.

Then, both began to compete to see who arrived faster. Along the way, they were playing and pushing each other, but laughing at the same time.

Finally, both of them were already tired, so they went to sit on the grass. The day was almost dark.

"That was... great!" Dixie exclaimed, looking tired, but cheerful at the same time. "This place was great."

"I knew you'd like it, Dixie," Diddy replied in the same tone.

"Hey, Diddy... I really appreciate it," she said with a small smile. "I think you've cheered me up a little... after remembering all that."

"It's okay, Dixie... I didn't want to see you sad," Diddy replied, smiling back.

Dixie had felt so much better, and much more with those words of Diddy and having spent a pleasant time with him.

"You know?" Dixie added. "These days have been the best after so long. My sister, cousins and I feel great on this island; it's as if we've really lived again in spite of everything. And all the other kongs were very kind to us, especially you; we consider you a great friend."

"Oh, it's nothing, I consider you very good friends too," Diddy replied, smiling at her. "And you know, we're with you all when you need us."

"The coolest thing about all of you, apart from being nice, is that you are very close," Dixie commented. "I really admire that about you. And besides you all are cheerful and very funny."

"Well, if you say *cheerful* and *funny*, just don't include Cranky in that category," Diddy joked, earning a few laughs from her.

"Hey, and do you have any friends other than the kongs on this island?" Dixie asked.

"Yes, I have other friends, but they live a little far from here. One of them is named Timber; he's one of my best friends. Do you also have more friends?"

"Yes, I had a few on the island where I lived... Although I doubt I will ever see them again."

There was a while of silence as they continued to rest. The atmosphere was quite quiet, which was complemented by the company of both... There was a moment where Diddy was looking sideways at Dixie, which she noticed and turned to look at him as well. Diddy was overcome with nerves at the eye contact and tried to return to a normal posture.

"Uhh... do you want to leave or not?" Diddy said, smiling with nerves still invading him.

"I don't think so... The sunset looks nice," Dixie replied serenely.

"I agree."

The pair of little kongs stayed to watch the sunset for a long time. Both enjoyed each other's company and made internal leaps of happiness; after all, things had gone well as they had thought, and now they had been able to go out alone and have a good time.

"We should go back to the waterfall another day; it was a lot of fun, don't you think, Diddy?" Dixie said, but Diddy didn't answer her this time. "Diddy?"

Dixie turned to look at him and realized that Diddy had fallen asleep. She laughed quietly at the sight of him like this, and then stroked his cheek a little... She stared at him for a long moment, which made her smile more.

Later, Diddy was waking up, so Dixie immediately turned to pretend she was distracted.

"What... Happened?" Diddy said, waking up and rubbing his eyes.

"You fell asleep," Dixie replied with a shrug and small laughs. "Why don't we go back to the house? It's almost night."

"Okay, let's go," Diddy said, getting up. "It's getting dark so fast."

Meanwhile, Donkey had spent the afternoon with Chunky, Kiddy and Tiny to prevent them from sneaking into Diddy and Dixie's date. According to all of them, they had managed to distract the other without them noticing. Even to prevent any awkward situation when Diddy and Dixie arrived together, Donkey had decided to take the three young kongs to Funky's residence to better distract them. Candy, Lanky and Swanky were also present accompanying them.

"Now it's my turn," Tiny said as they all played a board game.

"Huh! That token can't move like that," Chunky replied.

"Actually, you can," Lanky added, shrugging.

Donkey had planned to return home after that, but suddenly, he noticed the presence of Diddy and Dixie walking through the nearby trees... and heading towards the meeting place. Donkey made eye contact with them as they arrived and smiled forcibly at them, while trying to hide his expression in front of everyone.

In the same way, Tiny, Kiddy and Chunky had also noticed their arrival, so the three made disguised gestures to let them arrive calmly.

"Hello, friends!" Diddy and Dixie greeted them, smiling. "How are you around here?"

"Oh, hello, little friends!" Donkey greeted them, trying to speak to them normally, before the rest of the kongs greeted them as well.

"Hey, come play this game!" Tiny told them in the same way so as not to generate any tension.

"And how is this played?" Diddy asked them curiously.

"We'll teach you, come," Donkey added, inviting them.

Diddy and Dixie joined without further pretext to play with their friends. The outing had gone from a date between two friends to being a simple group meeting of friends... But while that was happening, both Donkey and Dixie's relatives kept dissembling and looking sideways at Diddy and Dixie, trying not to mention anything about it with their date... even though they wanted to laugh.

"Hey, do you want me to prepare an appetizer for you?" Funky suggested after a while.

"If you can; Chunky is hungry," Chunky replied, rubbing his abdomen.

"Okay, because I have some exquisite coconut drinks today," Funky added as he got up. "And right, Diddy and Dixie, where were you two this afternoon? You're the only ones I didn't see."

Diddy and Dixie's eyes opened to the maximum immediately, while Donkey, Tiny and Chunky tried to be the ones who knew nothing, although deep down they began to contain some laughter.

"Uhh... we just went for a walk," Diddy replied with a forced smile.

"Oh, *okay*," Funky said, smiling suspiciously as he retreated, while also holding back his laughter.

For their part, Diddy and Dixie were just trying to ignore it, while each of the two looked sideways at their respective relatives with hidden smiles between their teeth.

Later, the kongs continued with their game until it was done later, they even stayed for dinner all together. For one, Donkey went to sit together with Diddy in a corner, so he could talk to him more privately when asking him about his day.

"Well, little buddy," Donkey said, looking up. "How did you do with Dixie, huh? I was able to distract Tiny, Kiddy and Chunky, by the way."

"We did very well," Diddy replied, smiling. "We went to play at the waterfalls and on the Funky's aerial transporter."

"Really? You two had so much fun from what I see."

"You see, first we went under a tree and there we started talking about the two of us," Diddy began telling normally until he remembered the stories of Dixie. "Well... although she also told me... how they came to this island..."

"Wait, did she tell you about what happened to her whole family?" Donkey asked.

"The same, why?"

"You know? While I was with Tiny, Kiddy and Chunky, they also told me that story," Donkey said with some sadness. "It was terrible, it's really been hard for them. I didn't imagine something like that would have happened to them."

"I know, that's very sad... And that's why they were fugitives when they arrived."

"Yes, everything that happened to them must have been terrible," Donkey added in the same tone. "It was also why I brought them here, so they could cheer up a little."

"The good thing is that they feel good here, and they're good friends," Diddy added, smiling a little again. "And that's what happened, then I went with Dixie to the waterfalls, also to cheer her up."

"I see you didn't do badly then," Donkey said, patting him lightly on the shoulder. "And that's what you can do for her: be good friends and make the two feel comfortable sharing together, until who knows... Something else may arise."

"I don't think it sounds as complex as I thought anymore," Diddy said with a little laugh.

"Well, love situations are somewhat complex, actually," Donkey commented in the same way. "It just shouldn't be exhausting. If she is right for you, you shouldn't have to make so much effort to get she reciprocate you, because if otherwise, then she's not."

Although Diddy didn't quite understand the love situations, he was feeling comfortable listening to Donkey talk to him about it, especially in the situation he was in now. Chunky, Kiddy and Tiny were considered very good friends, but with Dixie... it was different, it was... something else he was feeling, something that even made him feel so good that he forgot even the conflicts with his bad classmates. And, of course, he was now happy to have shared some moments with her that afternoon; he really enjoyed being with Dixie playing and laughing or even talking for long periods.

At the end of their respective meals, Donkey and Diddy picked up their food trays, reuniting with the rest of the kongs.

"Diddy!" Tiny called him along with Dixie, to which he turned. "Do you want to come and play with us another round?"

"From the same game as recently?" Diddy asked. "Of course! Let's go."

"Come on. Chunky, Lanky and Swanky are already starting," Dixie said, taking his arm.

Then, Diddy went to meet his friends to join their game. Meanwhile, Donkey stared at him in the distance and smiled.

"So, he decided to ask Dixie out this afternoon, didn't he?" Candy said quietly, appearing next to Donkey.

"Yes, he was able to do it after all," Donkey replied with a few small laughs. "Anyway, it's seen that the two are good friends."

"Do you think that something will emerge with those two in the future?" Candy asked the same way. "I mean, I know they're still kids, but who knows."

"Hey, I don't know that yet; they're kids like you said," Donkey added with a shrug. "In the meantime, I would just have to keep in mind that Diddy does things right and see to his well-being."

"And you know?... I've seen Diddy happier these days," Candy said.

"It's true, I was going to tell you the same thing too," Donkey added, smiling as he looked at Diddy from a distance, having fun and playing with his friends. "In fact, I haven't noticed him so scared or worried about going to school this last week, it's as if... he would have had a change."

"Maybe before he was just overwhelmed by the latest adventure, darling," Candy added.

"Maybe," Donkey replied with a shrug and then a sigh. "I didn't want to take him on that adventure that time, but I couldn't leave him alone either. He is just a kid, although in a few years he will no longer be."

Later that night, Dixie with her cousins and sister were in the living room of their home. Therefore, she had also told them how she had fared with Diddy on their friendly date.

"... and that's all," Dixie finished smiling as she recalled the moments with Diddy. "We had a good time, and it was very nice."

"And then you two arrived at Funky's house with lost faces," Tiny said with a laugh.

"Hey, believe me, I wanted to ask how you all got there," Dixie added likewise. "But I also didn't want to create tension and mention it in front of Diddy and Donkey."

"Don't you think Diddy was also planning to hang out with Dixie?" Chunky questioned. "Donkey looked as if he also wanted to wind up the matter so that they would go out."

"Oh, I don't think so," Dixie said with a little laugh. Then, she breathed a sigh and smiled tenderly. "Oh, but hey, why am I going to lie to you?... Diddy was so cute, he treated me super nice and I feel too good being by his side."

"Who knows, sister," Tiny added with a playful smile. "I bet Diddy likes you a lot too."

"Do you think?" Dixie said with a few small laughs.

"I do think so, maybe one day something else will happen between you. Can you imagine if he ever asks you to be his girlfriend?"

"Hey, don't invent anymore," Dixie replied, blushing at the thought of it, and then looked into nothingness, sighing again. "Oh, although... it would be very nice if that happened."

Suddenly, Kiddy climbed on the couch and leaned out the window... As if looking for something, he turned his gaze to the starry sky and stayed like that for a while. The other three kongs looked at him strangely at first, so they went to see what happened to him.

"What's going on, Kiddy?" Dixie asked.

Kiddy turned to them and his gaze was very sad and melancholy, as if he was about to shed a few tears.

"Mom and Dad come back?" the little gorilla asked in a low tone. Apparently, he still didn't fully understand their situation.

The cheerful expression of the other three kongs also faded immediately, and they headed toward the little kong. Dixie placed her hand on Kiddy's back and looked at him with deep sadness as well.

"You see, Kiddy... It's hard all this, but they're gone and... they won't come back, ours won't come back either," Dixie replied in the same tone of voice, but trying to keep some strength in front of her little cousin. "But... surely they are resting somewhere better than this, and... perhaps we can still perceive their love for us in any pleasant thing that may happen to us... like landing on this island and finding good friends, for example," she added, smiling a little and remembering what Diddy had told her.

"But Chunky misses them a lot, too," Chunky said sadly, lowering his gaze.

"We all miss them," Tiny added in the same way. "These last few years have been very difficult."

"And they still are," Dixie continued, this time, letting her sadness be expressed without concealing it. "We... are the only ones that remain in our family, and the truth... even with all this, I don't know what might become of our future afterward."

"If Chunky finds those monstrous beings again, he would give them a lesson they won't forget," Chunky added, clenching his fists in indignation.

"And who doesn't? You don't know how I would want to do it if I could," Dixie said in the same way, before having another sigh. "But... We can do nothing but stay safe and... just see what will await us from now on... At least we are in a safe place and I just hope that we continue as well as possible," she concluded, emitting a short smile towards her sister and cousins, although she faded it again afterwards.

"I hope so, too," Tiny added with the same expression.

The four of them sat down and stood on the sofa for a while hugging each other. Even if Dixie wished with all her being that things were different or at least that she could do something about it, she knew that she couldn't do anything and that hurt her a lot, especially for her three remaining loved ones. The four kongs shed a few tears as they remembered their situation, but at the same time, between the four of them they felt safe staying united; after all, they still had each other, since they were the only members of their family they had left...

Chapter End Notes

This chapter ends here. Not counting the cute moments, I always found it somewhat difficult to reread these scenes :(

Chapter 12: A Long Season

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

A couple of weeks had passed and, to tell the truth, everything had gone normally and even with some tranquility.

It was another normal day of school. Dixie left her house and was heading towards Kong Kollege. She hadn't fared badly in her first few weeks as a student, in fact, homework and classes wise, she had been doing well.

She was walking calmly a short distance from Kong Kollege. When suddenly, a known voice called to her and she turned to look, adopting an expression of strangeness when she saw a certain orangutan kid.

"Hello, Dixie," Jemky suddenly appeared, wearing sunglasses and resting one hand against a tree.

"And what are you doing around here?" Dixie watched suspiciously, and put herself in position to fight if necessary.

"Hey, relax, I don't want to fight," Jemky replied with a few small laughs, walking next to her. "Why are you so alone around here? Do you want me to accompany you to school?" he said with apparent kindness.

"No. Do you need anything?" Dixie asked wryly.

"Well, I was just coming to see a... pretty girl," he said, lowering his glasses and looking up. Then, he took out a bouquet of flowers and held it out to Dixie. "I mean, *you, Dixie*. I brought these beautiful flowers for a beautiful monkey girl."

"Ugh, is it serious?!" Dixie replied, looking at him strangely. "And also, what do you bring those glasses for?"

"They're for you to see with a different style than who you'll have at your feet, baby," he added, winking at her. "Do you know something, Dixie? When I first saw you... I couldn't stop thinking about you," he said in a sweet tone as they continued walking. "Seriously, you are the most beautiful and precious girl I have ever seen."

Apparently, that orangutan boy showed some interest in Dixie. In fact, on a few occasions during those weeks, he had been trying to interact with her, but Dixie wasn't going to take it seriously, since he was one of those bad kids.

"Oh, and wait, I brought you other gifts," Jemky added, forcibly handing her the flowers and taking a box of candies out of his backpack. "I have these sweets for you to sweeten your little heart. And look also at what I brought you."

Jemky took out another smaller box from his backpack and showed it to Dixie, as they walked and she looked at him strangely. Inside the box, there was a pair of bright necklaces that had a rather fine appearance.

"These jewels are also for you," he said, handing her the box. "When I stea- I mean, when I bought them, I thought only you could make them look pretty," Jemky continued, gently grabbing her hair. "Look at you, you are a beautiful girl, I also see that you are strong and know how to fight very well. I haven't seen another girl who is as cute as you, and-"

"Yeah, yeah, thank you, but I have to go!" interrupted Dixie, giving him all the things back, almost throwing them.

Dixie tried to ignore him and kept walking at a faster pace, but immediately, Jemky stood in her head-on.

"Hey, not so fast, girl. What do you think if we hang out someday? Something... like a date, huh?" Jemky continued, winking at her again.

"And what makes you think I'll accept it?" Dixie replied, crossing her arms.

"A pretty girl like you deserves someone as handsome as me," he said with some pride. "You shouldn't be alone, or you could fall in love with a braggart; there are a lot of bad boys."

"Like you, for example," Dixie countered with a shrug.

"Me a bad boy? No, no, I'd do anything to have your heart, baby," he added, taking one of Dixie's hairs delicately. "We'd look great together."

"Ugh, of course not, if you're bad!" Dixie replied before continuing to walk. "Besides, just look at how you treat Diddy; you're a bully braggart!"

"Uhh... Well, but you know?" Jemky said with a forced smile. "Just because of you I would stop being like that and become the ape of your dreams," he said, wrapping an arm around Dixie's shoulders. "Well, what were we up to? Oh, yes, don't you think we should hang out, pretty girl?"

Dixie, losing patience, pulled him by the locks he had on his head.

"Get your hands off or *you'll see!*" exclaimed Dixie in a threatening tone that immediately frightened him.

"Hey, okay, okay, Dixie!" replied Jemky, smiling fearfully as Dixie held him tightly by the locks. "I just wanted to ask if you... would lend me the mathematics homework, that's all," he said with a look of supplication.

Dixie let him go and made a confused gesture at such a request.

"Is it serious? That homework is about planned exercises, and Mrs. Wrinkly said that no homework could be repeated."

"Please, just let me copy it this time... I just *didn't do it*," he continued pleading with a forced smile. "I promise you that our date will be the best you will have."

"I didn't even say yes to you about hanging out. And do your own homework, orange boy!"

Dixie pushed him out of the way and moved on, completely ignoring him. But in the face of that, Jemky didn't seem to want to give up.

"So, if I don't present the homework, *no one will present it!*" Jemky exclaimed, and proceeded to try to snatch Dixie's backpack to try to get her homework out.

"Hey, what's wrong with you?! It's not my fault you didn't do it!" Dixie exclaimed as she struggled with him to protect her backpack.

Both were struggling to get Dixie's homework, until Jemky managed to get it out. Dixie lunged at him to retrieve it, but then he made a sudden turn and cornered her against a tree with one hand, while with the other he held the homework.

"Well, make up your mind, Dixie," Jemky said with a fixed gaze. "Either you lend the homework to me, or it will be destroyed and you won't present it."

Dixie nearly pushed him away with a single kick... when suddenly, someone else appeared and gave Jemky a strong push that knocked him to the ground.

"Huh! And what do you think, idiot dwarf?" Jemky exclaimed as he got up.

"Leave her alone!" Diddy appeared on the defensive.

"Oh, are you going to defend your little friend, you stupid monkey?" Jemky said in a mocking tone.

"From hateful and bullies orangutans like you, yes!" Diddy replied firmly and this time with a defiant attitude.

"You've become very tall, haven't you?!" exclaimed Jemky before hitting Diddy on the head... But this time, Diddy didn't show any fear, and gave him back another continuous slap.

Dixie, seeing how the scene was going, jumped into action and gave Jemky more hits to get him away and help Diddy. Diddy grabbed Dixie's hand and then ran away with her.

"Let's go, Dixie!"

Both were running at speed towards Kong Kollege, trying to make Jemky lose sight of them.

Finally, they made it to the school, both exhausted from the escape but at least safe for the time being. They were going to get to the main courtyard to have more security, but suddenly...

"Catch them! "

His four bully classmates appeared, including Jemky, who with quick movements, caught them both, even Dixie was grabbed by the hair so that she couldn't perform any attack with it. The four snatched their backpacks from both as they struggled to avoid it. When the four kids got them, they pushed the two to the ground and grabbed them by the limbs. They proceeded to rummage through the backpacks until they found what were apparently the math homeworks they wanted so much from the two, and which had long been their favorite evil action towards Diddy.

"No one is going to present any stupid homework here!" Jemky decreed, holding both sheets and, without letting any more time pass, began to break them into pieces.

Diddy and Dixie got up from the ground as best they could and were shocked to see their homework all destroyed, while the bully children laughed at them in an evil way. Diddy took the pieces of paper that were on the ground and was about to release all his fury towards the group.

"Stupid cursed apes, faces of-"

"Wait a minute!" interrupted Dixie as she examined the pieces of paper as well. "This is not the homework; they are just a few loose notes to study," she said before laughing with a gesture of victory. Then, she reached into her backpack, took out another sheet of paper, and showed them to the bullies' face. "Here is the homework! *Fools!*"

"Say what?!" exclaimed the quartet, bewildered by the confusion.

"You're stupid, be more observant," Dixie mocked.

"But mine was the homework," Diddy said frustrated, showing the pieces of paper that, in short, were from his homework.

"Wait," Dixie replied as she reached for something else in her backpack, and then pulled out another sheet of written math exercises. "Here it is, I had done another emergency homework. Take it, just write your name on it."

Dixie handed the other sheet to Diddy. She carried another one because she wanted to make sure of any circumstance with the four bad kids.

"Is it serious? Thank you!" Diddy exclaimed, marveling at such a 'miracle'. "Hey, how did you make another one?"

"You told me that these idiots liked to destroy schoolworks," Dixie replied.

"Huh! But this doesn't stay that way!" exclaimed Jemky, about to attack with the group.

"Wait, here comes Wrinkly!" Rocky interrupted.

But unfortunately for the four of them, and fortunately for Diddy and Dixie, Wrinkly arrived later greeting them as usual to her students.

"Hello, children!" Wrinkly said with joy.

"Hello, Mrs. Wrinkly!" both groups said in unison as if nothing happened, but at the same time, throwing withering glances at each other indirectly.

"Hey, why are there so many pieces of paper lying on the floor?" Wrinkly asked them, watching them strangely.

"Oh, we were playing challenges with our friends Diddy and Dixie," Rocky said with a forced smile. "And we needed pieces of paper, but they fell off."

"Oh, okay, children, be careful," Wrinkly replied before retiring. "Now pick all that up and then come to class."

The class was about to start and everyone headed to the classroom. Jemky, Melenky, Rocky and Mandrew watched Diddy and Dixie angrily, while this pair only laughed at them and mocked how badly their move had turned out; now the four of them would be punished or sanctioned for not submitting their homeworks.

Diddy was grateful to Dixie for saving him from being unable to submit the homework he had done; he remembered this gesture over and over again as they walked towards the classroom. He had a little more confidence in Dixie and no longer feared so much for his four bully classmates.

"Hey, Dixie," Diddy spoke to her as they made their way to their desks.

"Yeah?"

"I was thinking if we could go to the ruins of DK Island this afternoon," Diddy proposed, cheerfully.

"The ruins? Sounds interesting!" she replied, looking excited. "It's ok. Can we go with Tiny, Kiddy and Chunky?"

"Of course," Diddy replied, smiling.

"Okay, then we'll meet later."

The two went to sit into their respective positions, and the class began as usual.

The days, or rather, several months, continued in the same way. Dixie, along with her now short family, returned to stabilize a little and find that tranquility they needed and, although on many occasions they were depressed or nostalgic for their old lives, the other kongs always managed to get a smile and cheer them up on certain days. The Kong family loved spending time with everyone gathered, and they never forgot the new four ones as well, who they already considered as other members of the family. They usually threw parties, went surfing, to the beach, or even a simple meeting. Chunky, Kiddy, Dixie and Tiny felt very comfortable on DK Island; the rest of the kongs treated them so well and offered some help when they needed it.

They all continued their normal lives: Donkey often dated Candy, spent time with Diddy or also took care of the banana reserve, Funky worked on his new inventions, Swanky with his game companies, Lanky with his jokes and his meals, Wrinkly with her classes, and Cranky with his stories of "his times" and with one or another of his experiments.

Life for Diddy had also taken a positive turn. Although he always had his friends from the island, he had no one on DK Island his age to play, tell secrets or share tastes. His closest friend to that was always Donkey, who more than his uncle, was like an older brother, but even so, Donkey's mentality was already in adult ape affairs. A long time ago, Diddy had friends at school, but they moved later, and the bad classmates he had now arrived, who were once his friends, but turned out to be bullies. And not to mention the rest of his classmates; they didn't even want to hang out with him. But with the arrival of Dixie and company, his days improved; he always went out to play with the four of them, they went for a walk or they just met to talk; Diddy found in them again that kind of positive friendship with whom to have fun.

But at the same time, something curious happened to him: while Diddy had become close friends with Tiny, Kiddy and Chunky and enjoyed hanging out with them, there was a special closeness with... Dixie. It was very clear that Diddy felt something beyond friendship; he enjoyed spending time with her very much and had a special confidence in her. On the other hand, Dixie showed the same affection towards Diddy. They had become very good friends even though deep down they

were feeling something else... But at the same time, the two were too shy in that realm to admit it. Donkey, on certain occasions, encouraged Diddy to tell his feelings to Dixie and, at the same time, Chunky, Tiny and Kiddy did the same with Dixie, so much so that even when they were in a group, they left the two of them alone on purpose, but the two never dared to say what they felt for fear of not being reciprocated or ruining the friendship. In addition, they still wanted to continue getting to know each other better before thinking about taking a loving step.

On the other hand, the quartet of bully children at school had stopped bothering them so much, rather because Dixie had given them a few lessons, since she used to stop their attacks, to the point where they no longer wanted to fight. Although Diddy didn't usually face the four of them well, there was a little reason why he armed himself with the strength to do so... and yes, it was on the occasions when Jemky would approach to gallant to Dixie; apparently, that orangutan boy was quite interested in her, and several times he tried to propose dates or give her gifts. It was inevitable for Diddy to become furious when Jemky tried to have such approaches towards her. Even so, he intervened because more than that, Dixie was also bothered by Jemky's attitude and, likewise, she rejected him directly and could even give him his comeuppance if he continued with the insistence.

Diddy and Dixie came to tolerate that bully quartet of school a little, but never quite got along. Even so, having each other, they no longer had any fear of being near their hateful classmates; generally, between the two they defended themselves against them. Diddy, for his part, never told the truth of those four bullies to Donkey, and Dixie, for her part, also kept that a secret even though she felt it would be right for Diddy to tell it. On several occasions, Dixie suggested to Diddy that he report them, but he never wanted to, so Dixie just tried to understand and also wait for the end of school to come so they two wouldn't have to see those four bully children anymore.

Anyway, Diddy and Dixie had become inseparable friends: they often walked together, and what they liked to do most was go to play and explore the island or just sit down to talk. On rare occasions, they argued and got angry for small reasons like any friendship, but they always knew how to reconcile. From time to time, almost *something* happened, or one of them plucked up the courage to say what they felt to each other... but they never succeeded; they also didn't want their friendship to be spoiled in case it was an unrequited feeling. Anyway, they had formed a special friendship, which both felt comfortable having.

It was a long quiet season; even King K. Rool hadn't bothered them again.

Chapter End Notes

This is the end of the introductory part of the fanfic :) And then... several things will come.

Chapter 13: Months Later, Last Weeks

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Several months had passed... In fact, it was already the last days of school in Kong Kollege's school year, and the vacations were already approaching. Diddy and Dixie had performed well during that cycle, unlike the group of bully children, who barely had enough grades to pass the school year.

Diddy was arriving at school normally; he no longer feared much for his evil classmates. In fact, in the wake of Dixie's arrival at school, Diddy had come to the point of seeing that quartet as just obnoxious classmates, rather than a great threat to him as they once were. He didn't even have nightmares about them anymore; it seemed that things had improved even a little. However, although those four children no longer physically mistreated him, they occasionally still teased him or made some joke or trick in bad taste.

Diddy didn't even hide when he got to school anymore and just passed by. Suddenly, someone else came by surprise and caused him a little scare. Of course, it was Dixie, who started laughing when she saw Diddy's expression after scaring him.

"Hey! Now you'll see!" exclaimed Diddy before lunging at her and tickling her.

"Let go of me!" Dixie replied with a laugh, and returned them. "Okay, okay," she added before stopping and finishing laughing. "Hey, Diddy, by the way... I found your notebook that you had lost. Take it."

Dixie took out of her backpack a notebook that was Diddy's, and that apparently had been lost days before. Then, she handed it into his hands.

"Hey, where did you find it, Dixie?!" Diddy exclaimed, taking it with emotion, before checking the pages at random. "I thought I wouldn't find it anymore."

"Those four fools had stolen it from you to copy last week's homework," Dixie replied before noticing a paralyzed expression on Diddy. "What's wrong?"

Diddy, while looking at the pages of his notebook, noticed that on one of them he had the name Dixie written inside a *heart* that he had made himself a long time ago. He froze for a few seconds and only begged in his mind that Dixie hadn't seen it.

"Uh... Oh, n-nothing, it was..." Diddy replied before quickly searching for another random page. "Oh, yes, I saw this misspelling that Wrinkly corrected me last week," he added, showing it Dixie with a nervous smile.

"But those are math exercises," Dixie said with a few small laughs, to which Diddy looked back at the page and realized it was true.

Diddy didn't know what other excuse to make, and tried to think of another idea to divert the topic. When suddenly, the group of bully children appeared near them.

"Oh, look, here's the pair of stinky geckos," Mandrew said along with the rest of the group. While they no longer bothered them with blows, they continued to tease them verbally or call them nicknames from time to time.

"How long do we have to listen to your 'look, the pair of *blah blah* has arrived?'" Dixie replied, imitating them exaggeratedly. "Stinky you four, *take a bath!*"

"Take a bath," Melenky imitated her in a high-pitched voice. "Pathetic monkeys!"

"Quartet of fools, you are so annoying!" Diddy replied, looking at them in disgust.

Diddy and Dixie just rolled their eyes, and then ignored them so that they could continue to walk towards the classroom.

"By the way, can we ask you a question?" Rocky added, looking up.

"And now what do you want?" Diddy asked, pausing with a bad gesture.

"Are you two dating or something?"

Diddy and Dixie, faced with the sudden question, opened their eyes to the fullest and instantly looked at each other in a strange way.

"No!" they replied at the same time, simulating an expression of disgust.

"What are you talking about?" Diddy asked them, looking at them strangely.

"Oh, we said it because you always are *together*," Melenky said in a mocking tone and emitting a laugh with the group.

"So what? We're friends," Diddy replied, avoiding blushing at the awkward moment.

"Yes, but friends who are very *close*, from what I see," Mandrew added before laughing again.

"Hey, don't say stupid things!" replied Diddy. "We-"

Suddenly, the whole situation was interrupted when, for some reason, they heard a rather deep voice behind them.

"Good morning, students!" and that voice... wasn't from Wrinkly this time.

Everyone turned immediately, as it took them by surprise. They gasped when what they saw was a tall, strong, mustachioed middle-aged gorilla with neatly fixed hair and an elegant suit jacket and bow tie... But at the same time, with a hard look that was literally scaring Diddy, Dixie, and even the quartet of bully kids.

"I will be your new teacher for the time being," the ape announced. His voice was thick and sounded quite authoritative. "Now, everyone go to the classroom! Class is about to begin."

At first, everyone stood still for a couple of seconds while processing the image of that ape; they were too confused by that new presence. But then, they began to head to the classroom, not wanting to make eye contact with that male gorilla and walking tightly tense.

"And who is that ape?" Jemky whispered to Diddy and Dixie along with the group, trying not to shake his nerves.

"Wrinkly has gone on vacation and said she would send a replacement to school," Diddy replied in the same tone.

"But she never said it would be someone... *like he*," Dixie added with the same expression.

Indeed, Wrinkly had taken a good rest. Cranky had decided to take a senior cruise vacation and, of course, took his wife as well. But Wrinkly couldn't abandon her teaching job, so she had made a temporary contract with another teacher to lead her students during the last days.

All the kong children were entering the classroom, although this time they didn't seem to be calm. Just looking at the new teacher caused the students to be stiffer than a stone, because he had all the appearance of being very strict. Everyone went to their respective seats without making a single noise, while the new teacher walked back and forth at the front of the classroom, throwing stern glances at the whole class.

"Well!" he said, tapping firmly on the desk after a long silence. "First of all, good morning again, sir students. Mrs. Wrinkly is absent at the moment, so she entrusted me to take care of you. I'm Mr. Pinky Kong."

Everything was absolute seriousness until they heard his name, which was funny to the children, making them about to burst into laughter, but soon after, the teacher noticed such a murmur.

"Silence!" the new ape exclaimed, making everyone quiet again. "Now I want to know your names so I can take your attendance later."

Although at first all the students looked at each other as if they didn't know what to say, each one began to get up from their seats and say their names with a trembling voice, while the teacher was marking the names on a sheet.

"Okay!" the new ape exclaimed again. "Now I want you to tell me what was the last topic you saw."

The students were still tense and none even wanted to answer the question at first. Everyone turned to each other as if wondering who dared to answer first.

"I just asked you a *question*!" replied the new teacher, raising his voice a little and earning more fearful looks from the students. "What was the last topic you saw?!"

"Uhh... the square and cubic root, m-mister," Diddy dared to answer in a nervous voice, to which the teacher only nodded in a serious way.

The new teacher, *Pinky*, began teaching the class. Even the group of evil children was fearful; and it's that with that appearance, that look and that tone of voice of that teacher, he made them think that at any moment he would punish them for the minimum cause. The new teacher taught the class and asked the children many questions about the topic they saw, which made them more nervous about answering.

Everyone remained still during class hours, even during break, since the teacher was keeping a fixed watch on them in any situation. The only thing that kept amusing the students was his name,

since with that appearance and that attitude, they didn't expect him to have such a name.

During the break, like the other groups of children, Diddy and Dixie were in a corner. As expected, that new teacher was the topic of conversation of the day, even if he was watching the students with an expression that reassured even the most restless.

"Where is that new teacher from?" Dixie asked Diddy quietly as they looked at him sideways.

"Wrinkly said he's from a large community of teachers," Diddy replied. "She made a request for a replacement teacher and it looks like they've sent that one."

"But it seems that he's very... *arrogant*."

"Yes, he's scary. Luckily, there is little left for the end of the cycle, so we couldn't have any mishap with him."

"Anyway, it would only be like going with the flow if he keeps getting heavy," Dixie finished with a shrug. Then, they both started eating their lunch breaks. "Wow, I feel that this cycle has passed quickly. It seems like it was last week that I came, and now it's going to end."

"That's right. And the truth, it hasn't been so bad since you came, I mean... you're my only friend here," Diddy replied with a few small laughs. "And besides, those four fools haven't been so annoying anymore; they've been calmer."

"And by the way... you still don't think to tell Donkey or Wrinkly about that?"

"Uh, I think it's better to leave things there," Diddy said with a shrug. "I don't want to get us into any more trouble. Besides, maybe it's not long before we continue to see those four, so it may not be necessary anymore."

"What are you naming us for?" suddenly exclaimed another voice.

Both turned to look and saw that it was the quartet, who even bumped their shoulders and caused them a little scare.

"And what do you want?" Diddy asked them, looking at them strangely.

"We wanted to ask you," Rocky said quietly, "where did that big teacher come from?"

"Well, from a community of teachers, I suppose," Diddy replied with the same expression.

"And is Wrinkly coming back or not?" Melenky asked them.

"Yes, but not in this cycle," Diddy replied.

"Why? Are you also afraid of the new teacher?" Dixie told them in a mocking tone.

"Of course not," Jemky replied with a strange look. "Why should we fear that one?"

"Neither do I," Mandrew added in the same way. "We just asked."

"And by the way... so close together I see you two, huh?" Melenky told them, giving them little pushes along with the group... except for Jemky.

"Oh, the monkey couple!" Mandrew added in the same way as laughing. "You are dating!"

"Hey, what antics are you saying?!" Diddy replied, looking at them reluctantly. "Dixie and I are friends!"

"Oh, yes, *buddies!*" added Rocky with a mocking smile. "Buddies of those who like each other."

"Shut up, don't talk nonsense!" Diddy replied as he got up with Dixie and they walked away.

"Oh, you're leaving together!" they kept bothering them from a distance. "They are a couple-".

"*Students!*" exclaimed the new teacher from the door of the classroom, with an authoritative voice that left all the children present still, the instant they heard him. "Break is over! *Everyone to the classroom, please!*"

Later, the break ended and the students returned to the classroom. Although the class continued normally, the new teacher kept throwing intimidating looks; it was as if he had a certain gift for imposing discipline on a group.

By noon, it was almost time to leave, and the new teacher had to give a final announcement.

"Sir students!" exclaimed the teacher in his authoritative voice. "As you know, your vacations are almost around the corner, but not before taking your final exam!" saying 'final exam' instilled more fear in them. The only thing the students imagined was an exam with such difficult questions. "But I want to tell you something: *I won't take it to you*" those words were of great relief to everyone. "But *I will send you a school project* and that will be the grade of the exam," he added, returning to a stern tone and making everyone immediately return the tension.

"And... what... are you going to send us... Mr. *Pinky?*" asked Rocky, almost stuttering.

"I want you to make a miniature pyramid with a nice finish on its top, it has to be some *shiny stone*, like a jewel, for example. You can make the pyramid with the materials you want," replied the teacher, before showing a small smile for the first time in the day and with a calmer tone of voice.

"Uh, and why don't we take the exam better?" Jemky suggested with a shrug, earning withering glances from the rest of the children.

"Do you just want *to take the exam?*!" said the teacher, returning to his threatening tone that scared the students again.

"No, no, no! We just want the school project," Diddy hastened.

"Well! So, you have two weeks to do your works. I will grade them on the last day of school, but you have to bring it done in advance to check if you are doing well, okay?"

The students nodded their heads, still with some expressions of some fear.

"Okay!" added the teacher, going to take his belongings. "You can leave, kids. The class ended today."

Minutes later, class was over and all the children left the classroom. The new teacher stayed to watch that every kid went home, which bothered the group of four bullies, but in turn, favored Diddy and Dixie, since the others wouldn't have a chance to bother them.

Before leaving, the four bully children stared sideways at Diddy and Dixie as they walked away, while these two smiled mockingly at them, as the new teacher was nearby monitoring the area like a guardian.

"They just simulate, but they're afraid of him too," Dixie said quietly, referring to the quartet.

"On that side, I'm glad that teacher had arrived," Diddy added. "I feel like he would give those four a good lesson... Although jokes aside, a punishment from him would be scary."

"And how are we supposed to make that pyramid? I don't know if I would have preferred an exam as well."

"I don't know yet. Oh, and you also have to get a shiny stone like said that Mr... *Pinky*," Diddy finished, emphasizing the name and making them both start laughing as they remembered it.

"Why would he be named that?" Dixie wondered, finishing laughing along with Diddy. "I mean, he looks too serious to have that name."

"No idea, what does it have to do with the color pink?" added Diddy shrugging as he began to walk along with Dixie, heading home. "Geez, and I don't even have any diamonds or anything brilliant to put on that pyramid."

"I think I have some at home; those could help."

"Anyway, we can tell Donkey if he can help us over the weekend. Although I would have to ask him well, since I think I remember that he was going to have an important date with Candy, you know: couple matters."

"Wow, they two do things together so much," Dixie said with a little laugh.

"Yes, that's how those two are," Diddy replied in the same way and shrugged. "They spend too much time together."

"Would you ever have a girlfriend too?" asked Dixie curiously, earning a strange look from Diddy. "I mean, if you'd be like that too?"

"No, I mean... I'm not thinking about those things," he replied, smiling and with the same expression.

"And for asking... Has any girl ever caught your attention?" she asked with a forced smile and as if she were looking at him sideways.

"What do you say? Of course not," Diddy added, looking at her more strangely and with a few slight laughs. "I don't care about those matters, really," he added, shrugging, before continuing to walk.

"Really... never, never?" Dixie asked again, looking at him sideways and curiously at the same time.

"Hey, of course not," replied Diddy, looking at her this time seriously. "I wouldn't be that 'cloying' with anyone," he finished as he went on his way, but at the same time... earning a look of disappointment from Dixie.

Chapter End Notes

That new teacher who arrived is almost, almost also a OC. I don't have his design embodied, but I've imagined him as a mix between Bluster and Uncle Kong. Obviously, only in his physical appearance; his personality is so different.

Chapter 14: Indecisions and a Gift

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The Kong family used to meet often on weekends after a few laborious days, and this occasion was one of them. It was night and they were in the middle of the jungle, near a lake. On the one hand, there were the older kongs like Donkey, Candy, Funky, Swanky, and Lanky; while in another corner, there were the younger ones like Diddy, Dixie, Kiddy, Tiny and Chunky, who were playing a card game.

Diddy was having a good time with his friends as he used to do when they got together. While playing cards, in an oversight of Dixie, Diddy looked at her cards and saw that she had quite an advantage for the game.

"Hey, what's that up there?" Diddy pointed out, making the rest of the group look up, and took advantage of the distraction to take Dixie's card and place it in the center.

"Hey, hey, very funny, aren't you?!" Dixie exclaimed, who realized Diddy's trap instantly.

"Oh, too bad, I've already won," Diddy added mockingly.

"No, that card was *mine*!" replied Dixie, picking up the card that Diddy stole from her, but he took it back from her. Immediately, Dixie threw the cards in his face.

"Hey!" Diddy, in revenge, threw more cards at Dixie and thus began a 'war' between the two of them.

"Hey, it's just a game, stop fighting," Tiny said, frowning and placing her hands at her sides.

"He started!" Dixie replied, annoyed.

"Well, let's start another round and no cheating!" Chunky exclaimed, calming them down.

"But I didn't cheat!" Diddy lied, holding back his laughter.

"Huh, how can you say no?!" Dixie exclaimed, looking at him angrily.

"Oh, you both love each other," Tiny muttered with a few small laughs.

"What?" asked Diddy, who luckily didn't hear well.

"Nothing, I said don't fight anymore," Tiny replied with a few small laughs, while Dixie blushed a little and looked furiously at her sister, since she had heard what she had said.

"Okay, okay," Diddy added, calming down. "Let's play again, I won't cheat anymore."

"Not you, but now it's going to be my turn to play for real," Dixie said, smiling defiantly.

"Yes, yes, we'll see," Diddy replied in kind.

Many times, when playing, Diddy liked to cheat to annoy Dixie on purpose; they were friendly fights, of course. On certain occasions, the others in the group used to look at them with speculations as far as feelings are concerned, although these two didn't usually realize it.

Later, Funky called everyone to have some fruit sodas he had prepared, and then they dispersed into several groups. It was a moment of rest.

Diddy, on the one hand, was sitting on a rock by himself, while drinking his soda. From there, he could only look into the distance... to Dixie. While she was now his best friend, deep down, Diddy felt much more for her; beyond her appearance, her way of being or her friendship, it was something inexplicable what he felt, what he liked about Dixie was simply... *her*. A long time ago, when he had just met her, he couldn't imagine feeling something like that... Perhaps, now he was understanding Donkey better when he told him about Candy from their beginnings.

"Diddy," Donkey said, appearing near him, so Diddy turned to look at him. "Come, I need to talk to you."

Both kongs went to talk in a corner, a little isolated from the other ones. Donkey would have to say something important to his little nephew.

"What happened, Donkey?"

"Well, little buddy, you'll see... is that I think it's time that... *you should tell her*," he suggested quietly.

"Tell what? Who?" Diddy asked in confusion.

"Well, who else, little buddy?" he added, arms crossed. "To Dixie. You know *what*."

"What?! Oh, no, Donkey, I don't think I can--"

"Come on, buddy! Isn't that what you say you want?" he said, giving him a little push and smiling at him. "Besides... she also shows that she likes you," he whispered in the last sentence.

"Why do you say that?"

"Haven't you noticed? When you ask her to hang out *just the two* of you, she looks pretty excited. She cares about you, and she looks very smiling when she's with you."

"But, Donkey, that's what friends do too, and she sure sees me as one of them."

"But those *just friends* can also become *something more* when they've been very close, you know?"

"Oh, I don't know, Donkey, I don't know how to do it, at least not for now," Diddy didn't feel quite sure telling Dixie his feelings; he was afraid that she wouldn't feel the same way and then she would no longer want to be his friend.

"Okay, little buddy, it doesn't have to be exactly now. Just find the best moment and tell her," he said, placing a hand on his shoulder. "But I think you could do it anyway."

"What if she doesn't feel the same way and goes away and we won't be friends anymore?" Diddy asked worriedly.

"Well, if she accepts you, well for you. And if not... you just have to be strong and respect her decision too," Donkey said. "Oh, but something important: whether she reciprocates you or not, never leave your friendship, even if you'd have to get away from her for a long time until things pass. If you two drift away forever, it's because maybe you weren't such friends after all."

"Are you sure I should tell her, Donkey? That's risky."

"Of course yes, buddy, I know it's risky but look: you've been getting to know each other for a long time, you're best friends, you care about each other, and you share moments together. I think you have enough to take that *risk*."

Diddy looked at Dixie again in the distance. Would he be able to tell her? Just thinking about it, all Diddy felt was nerves and more nerves invading him. Donkey put his hand back on Diddy's shoulder.

"Cheer up, Diddy. If you want, don't do it now, but try not to let too much time pass... Or it could be too late."

"O-okay, Donkey... I'll try, I hope I can," replied Diddy, still not so sure.

"Okay, little buddy," Donkey said, patting him on the head. "Anyway, if you need any help, don't hesitate to talk to me."

Donkey left the site and went back to his friends. Diddy just stood there thinking for a long time after that conversation. He knew deep down that for something else to happen with Dixie, he would have to be direct and confess his feelings to her, but he didn't know how to do it or what words to use. Besides, the reaction that Dixie could have and the risk of ruining their friendship only generated fear to him, more fear than the new teacher who had arrived at the school. He wasn't sure if Dixie would see him as more than a friend, considering he didn't even know how to take a first step and what to do after he confessed to her.

"Diddy," someone behind him called later. Diddy turned to look and, as if it were a coincidence, it was Dixie. "Can you come for a moment? I wanted to show you something."

Diddy looked at her strangely at first, but then followed, and both of them headed to a corner among the trees. Dixie seemed to carry in her hands a small box wrapped with a ribbon, as if it were any surprise.

"What were you going to show me, Dixie?" he asked her curiously.

"Well, Diddy, it's that... you've been my best friend and... I thought you would like this. Take it" Dixie showed him the small box. Diddy got surprised for a moment, but then he took it.

"Oh, it's... a gift?" Diddy asked as he opened the box, where inside it was a photo of the two of them that Funky had taken months earlier. Below the photo, there was a note that said *'for the coolest monkey on DK Island'* written clearly in Dixie's handwriting and, in addition, there was a very bright emerald of a deep green hue. "Wow, is this really for me?"

"Yes, you'll see... that stone is the only thing I could bring from where we lived. My mom gave it to me because it was the same as the color of my eyes, and... she had told me that if I give it away, I could give it to someone special who I'd trust and who I'd love very much, and... I thought you might be *that someone*."

Although the detail was small, it made Diddy smile, and he had to restrain himself so as not to blush before the last words Dixie had said: did she say that she considered him someone very special and that she *loves very much*?

"Oh... it's great, thank you, Dixie!" Diddy said, smiling excitedly, before looking a little confused. "Uh, Dixie, but isn't this emerald some kind of family heirloom or something?"

"No, it is not a relic, I always carried it to remember that she is taking care of us from wherever she is, but... I know she will still do so regardless of whether I take it with me or not; she told me I could give it away, so you can keep it... I know you would be that someone special to me," Dixie reassured, smiling at him. "You can use it for the pyramid that the new teacher told us to make," she suggested, whispering.

"Really?" Diddy asked again, to which Dixie nodded. "Okay, Dixie" he looked at the gift for a few seconds and paused before continuing... remembering what Dixie had told him. "You are also important to me."

Suddenly, a smile immediately appeared on Dixie's face.

"So do you," Dixie replied, smiling at him and trying not to blush too.

The two were talking alone, and at the time, Diddy remembered what Donkey had suggested to him recently.

"Uhh, Dixie... I had something to tell you too," he said with a forced smile, as he tried to take courage to tell her. "I mean, can you hear it right now?"

"Oh, yeah? What is it, Diddy?" Dixie asked, smiling, seemingly, showing some curiosity.

"W-Well, it's that..." he continued trying, but at the last second, he didn't succeed. "Uh, no, forget it, it was nothing important."

"Uh, sure?" she asked him again, still looking curious. "I mean, did you want to tell me something?"

"No, really, I even forgot," Diddy added, trying to be confident and laughing a little. "Oh, yes, I remembered: Donkey said that tomorrow he could help us with the pyramids, so you can go to our house."

"Oh... it was just that... Uh, I mean, it's okay, there's no problem tomorrow," Dixie replied... although with a forced smile, and even with an apparent disappointment.

"Yes, of course, you can go tomorrow," Diddy added, speaking normally again. "Donkey even said he could help us with the pieces of wood to use it."

"Okay, I thank you. Then we'll meet tomorrow at your house."

Diddy smiled at her, to which Dixie smiled back, and then they went away from that corner to reintegrate with the other kongs. Even so, Dixie didn't seem to want to look away from Diddy while he wasn't seeing her. She smiled at first, but then her smile faded... as if something hadn't gone as she expected.

The gathering of all kongs continued, and this time they all met together: from the older kongs to the younger.

"Dudes, I propose that we play something," Funky suggested to the rest of the Kongs.

"*Yeah*, and what do we play?" asked Chunky.

"Let's play *truth or dare!*" Swanky proposed.

"Great!" Tiny exclaimed. "Uhh, but how do we play that?"

"It's very easy," Swanky replied. "We must all stand in a circle, spin a banana in the center, and whoever it points will choose whether to answer a question truthfully or dare a challenge. Whoever lies or doesn't meet the challenge will eat the banana but covered with the mud of that puddle over there," he concluded, pointing to a very dirty muddy puddle that was nearby. "Exactly, no one is going to want to do that and it's harmful, so it's the way for you to comply."

The whole group decided to participate. They were placed in a round and therefore placed a banana in the center as indicated by Swanky.

"All right, here goes," Swanky said, spinning the banana, which stopped just pointing at himself and Donkey. "Well, with you we start, Donkey. Do you want *truth* or *dare*?"

"Dare," Donkey replied with all attitude.

"I dare you to climb that tree and stand headfirst on one of its branches," Swanky pointed to a tree with unconventional branches to climb.

"Oh, that's easy," Donkey said without concern, and proceeded to meet the challenge. He climbed the tree and stood headfirst on a branch... However, unfortunately, he weighed a lot and fell off the tree. But luckily, he had a good fall. "Geez!"

Then, he joined the group and they spun the banana again. On this occasion, it pointed to Lanky and Funky. For his part, Funky chose a dare.

"All right, Funky, I dare you to swallow one of those fallen leaves," Lanky said defiantly.

"Oh, really?!" exclaimed Funky, hands on his sides. Then, with a little disgust, he took a dried tree leaf and ate it, showing quite disgusted afterwards. "I will take revenge, Lanky!"

They spun the banana again, and this time it pointed at Tiny and Lanky. The latter also chose a dare.

"Okay, Lanky, I dare you to wallow in that puddle over there," Tiny pointed to the mud puddle.

"Oh, why me?" complained Lanky before going to dive into the puddle to finish all muddy and dirty.

"Well, revenge won't be necessary anymore," Funky said triumphantly.

They spun the banana again, and it pointed to Chunky and Candy. She chose dare as well.

"I dare you to give Donkey a hug and a kiss," Chunky said.

"Of course," Candy hugged and kissed Donkey as everyone made a tender expression.

Again, they spun the banana, and this time it pointed at Funky and Diddy. Diddy, knowing how bold Funky was, could imagine that he would put a risky challenge on him, so he decided to choose truth.

"Oh, brother, I wanted to challenge you to jump into the lake from that tree," Funky said frustrated. "But since you chose *truth*, well... here's the question," Funky cast a defiant look at Diddy before questioning him. "Have you ever liked Dixie?"

Diddy felt his nerves activating at the sudden question; now he wished he had chosen *dare*. The question also activated curiosity in others. Donkey almost burst out laughing and, at the same time, Dixie's family was in the same. For her part, Dixie tried to stay serious and calm, although she also felt the nerves alive... even if deep down she expected an affirmative answer from Diddy.

"What?! W-what do you say, Funky?! Of course not, she's my friend, and *it would be... weird* to see her that way," Diddy clarified, trying to sound as true as possible.

"Are you sur-"

"I said no, Funky," replied Diddy, with a forced and simulated smile before the sentence was over.

"Okay, okay," Funky said, almost laughing because he knew Diddy was lying, but he wasn't going to give him away either. "Following!"

Dixie, hearing that, just disguised an expression of seriousness, and had to admit that she was a little disappointed at that answer.

They spun the banana again, and now it pointed to Swanky and Dixie. Dixie was going to choose *truth*, but she didn't want awkward questions, so she chose *dare*. Swanky also gave her a defiant look.

"Well, Dixie, I dare you-"

"Wait, wait... Uhh, I think I don't want to play anymore," Dixie said as she stood up and smiled a little.

"Hey, what are you saying?" replied Swanky. "I was going to dare you to dip your hair in the puddle."

"Oh, no, not that! I mean..." Dixie replied, thinking of some quick excuse. "Uh, I just don't want to play anymore."

"What do you say? Just dip some of your hair," Swanky said, his hands on his sides. "Look, we have *all* completed challenges."

"No, no, just... I don't want to play anymore, I think I got tired," Dixie said before leaving without arguing further. "I'll be back, I'll go to rest for a while."

"Hey, Dixie, but we're all playing," Swanky said when she was further away, so he just shrugged. "Anyway. Let's continue then for now. Following!"

The group of kongs continued with their game, and spun the banana again to signal the next participants.

On the other hand, Dixie went to a corner among the trees and stayed there for a while. When suddenly... She didn't know how, but for some reason, she felt somewhat disappointed; specifying why, it led her to think about Diddy's answer; the fact that he said that it would be weird to see her more than a friendship, generated her a certain inevitable disappointment that she couldn't explain... It was as if she was somewhat frustrated to hear that.

But she didn't want to be discouraged at the time, so she later returned to the group and they continued playing with challenges or chatting until they started to get tired. Without a doubt, everyone enjoyed the moments where they did group activities.

Finally, everyone went home at the end of the meeting late at night.

Chapter End Notes

We're already in the main plot :)

Chapter 15: Pyramids

It was the next day in the afternoon. Donkey and Diddy were at home waiting for Dixie to start the schoolwork that the new teacher had sent as an exam grade, and Donkey was going to help them both with that.

"Believe me, I can't get over your face last night with Funky's question," Donkey said with a laugh.

"Oh, shut up, don't even remind me," Diddy replied embarrassedly. "I hope Dixie doesn't remember that. Oh, and don't even think about mentioning that topic when she arrives!"

"Hey, buddy, you should have taken that moment to say it," Donkey joked.

"No, no way. How was I going to say that in front of everyone?"

"And look how nervous you are," Donkey said, beginning to tickle him. "Look how you get because you know she's coming now."

"Oh, no, of course not, Donkey!" Diddy replied laughing and trying to dodge the tickling.

"Of course yes," he added playfully before stopping the tickling. "And look, she made you that gift with that emerald; that is more than clear. You should tell her now," he suggested, putting his hands at his sides.

"But that was a gift of friendship," Diddy replied with a shrug.

"Are you sure?" Donkey added, crossing his arms and looking up. "Hey, and when she arrives, why don't you tell her you like her?"

Suddenly, the door was knocked and they both stopped their game. They headed to see who it was and, as expected, it was Dixie. Donkey opened the door, and then she entered the house.

"Hi, Donkey. Hi, Diddy," Dixie greeted them cheerfully.

"Hi, Dixie!" they replied in unison trying to disguise that they were not talking about her on that topic... and hoping she hadn't heard anything behind the door.

"What? What happened?" Dixie asked, noticing their tense faces.

"Nothing, why?" replied Donkey, shrugging and disguising. "Oh, well, let's get to work. Did you bring all your materials, Dixie?"

The three kongs began to get down to work on the school project. Donkey was the one who gave the instructions: to each of the two he gave two pieces of wood that were similar in shape to a cube, and they would have to cut them into sheets from larger to smaller. Obviously, doing that was very tedious for both of them, but Donkey offered his help.

"Why won't your new teacher take a normal final exam for you?" Donkey asked them.

"He's crazy, I don't know what he wants these pyramids for," Dixie replied as she tried to cut a piece of wood.

"Still, I don't want to imagine one of his exams," Diddy added. "It would have questions that we have never seen even in our past lives."

"And I'm sure he'll come out saying: *'In ten minutes you'll give me the exam or I'll lower your grades!'*" continued Dixie, imitating Mr. Pinky.

"It's very arrogant, really," Diddy added as he placed a piece of the pyramid. "One of our classmates received a low grade from him on a test just because he didn't write his name. The good thing is that we won't see him for that long."

Sure enough, Mr. Pinky had been a headache during that week for Kong Kollege's students; apart from his authoritarian attitude, he also put them to solve difficult exercises and asked them very complex questions, and those who didn't respond well or committed some infraction had their grades mercilessly lowered.

Suddenly, there was a knock on the door by someone else, so Donkey went to check who it was. This time, it was Funky, who apparently, also needed Donkey's help.

"Hi, dude, how are you?" said Funky before giving a look of pleading. "I just needed a *little help*."

"Yeah, what's going on, Funky?"

"I was testing my new plane, but it had some failures, so it fell and got stuck on some rocks. So, could you help me get it out of there?"

"You see, now I'm helping Diddy and Dixie with their schoolwork, but if it's not too late I can go."

"Huh! How about you, brothers," Funky greeted the two little kongs, and they waved back. Then, he headed back to Donkey. "Okay, brother, so let's go."

"Agreed. I'll be right back, little friends," Donkey said to the two, leaving the house, but not before stopping at the door to talk to Diddy. "Oh, and by the way, Diddy... this is your *chance*," he whispered with a smile behind the door and pointed his gaze at Dixie before leaving.

Diddy got almost nervous upon hearing such recklessness, but remained serious as Dixie was present.

"Chance?" Dixie asked in confusion.

"Uhh, Donkey with his witticisms," Diddy replied with a forced smile to disguise.

Diddy and Dixie continued with their pyramids and putting the pieces together. They were both alone, and it was clearly Diddy's chance to finally confess his feelings to Dixie, but would he be able to do so at that moment? Or maybe not. But even so, he didn't rule out the idea of telling her right there.

"Hey, Diddy... Donkey has any surprises for Candy or something?" Dixie asked curiously.

"No, as far as I know," Diddy replied, concentrating on his work. "Why?"

"Because when I arrived here, I thought I heard him saying 'when she arrives, *I'll tell her I like her*,'" she said with a little laugh.

Instantly, Diddy felt all those nerves running through him again and almost got panicked, but at the same time, he calmed down because Dixie hadn't heard *exactly* what Donkey had said just before she had arrived.

"Ahh, yes... now that I remember, he did tell me that he was going to give her a surprise," Diddy excused with a forced smile.

"But why is he going to tell her that he likes her if they are already a couple?"

"Well, it's that... they're going to recreate their love story," Diddy replied with a forced laugh and no idea what he said. "You know how they are, very detailed and loving."

Then, Dixie looked at him strangely for a few seconds, and then started laughing too.

"Love must be crazy, I guess," Dixie said, and Diddy went along with laughter.

"Yeah, yeah, I see that it really is," Diddy replied following the flow in the matter, before continuing with his work to divert the topic a little.

"Hey, Diddy," Dixie said later. "And just for curiosity... would you make those loving details if you had a girlfriend?"

Suddenly, Diddy opened his eyes as wide as he could, and had to struggle not to blush intensely.

"What are you saying?" Diddy said, pretending a look of weirdness, before continuing on to his pyramid. "I couldn't even be with someone that way, I mean... sounds funny and silly to see me like this, doesn't it?"

Instantly, Dixie gave him a look of seriousness and some disgust, but then hurriedly continued with her pyramid to disguise, while Diddy also continued with his own.

Diddy knew that was his chance; it was now or never. He had to tell her, because as Donkey had told him: then it might be too late. But he couldn't; just thinking about it, he was invaded by questions such as: what if she won't correspond to him? What if later she won't even want to be his friend anymore? What if things won't be the same anymore?... But what if he'll try anyway?

"Hey, Dixie," Diddy said, trying not to look at her at first.

"Yeah?" she replied while she was placing a piece in the pyramid.

"Uhh, it's that... I wanted to tell you something," Diddy decided to say his first words of confession.

"Yeah, what's going on?"

"You see, it's that... Well, I... I was going to tell you..." but he still had difficulty saying it at once. "You're my friend, but..."

Suddenly, Dixie raised her head and turned to look at him with some curiosity... as if expecting to hear *something* specific from Diddy, but he kept trying to say it with difficulty.

"What's wrong, Diddy?"

Diddy was one small step away from confessing it; the more he thought about it, the more nervous he felt, but he had to... Who knows if it was worth it and could be the beginning of a new story: he and Dixie would transform their friendship into something more; his illusions about her would come true. He had to do it no matter what, or he would regret it later.

"Dixie..." he said, looking her straight in the eye; he couldn't wait any longer. He took a little breath before uttering it, "actually, I lik- I like your pyramid!" he hurriedly told her, pointing to Dixie's pyramid, which was barely half done.

"My pyramid? But if it's not even finished" Dixie's expression also changed immediately, and she looked at him weirdly; she went from having bright eyes to a sneaky frustrated look.

"I know, but... it's still going to look great," Diddy added, trying to act normal... At the last minute he had repented.

Dixie looked at Diddy again strangely... as if that's not what she expected him to tell her. But suddenly, she smiled at him and gave a little laugh.

"Diddy, uh... *I like your pyramid* too," she pointed to Diddy's pyramid, which was half shaped too "T-that's all you were going to tell me?" she asked with a look of curiosity.

"Yeah, yeah, it was that," Diddy replied with a forced smile, "that your pyramid looks very nice and will look great."

"Oh, it was just that," she said with a short smile, but then expanded it again. "Uh, I thought it was something els- I mean, it's good that you like my pyramid."

Diddy reacted to the moment and realized the incoherence he had told her. They continued to make the pyramids normally, until later, Diddy wanted to try again.

"Well, okay, Dixie... What I was actually going to tell you is that-"

Then, the door slammed open and Donkey entered through it, with a face of pure tiredness.

"I'm back, little friends," Donkey said, gasping with exhaustion.

"You made a lot of effort, didn't you?" Dixie asked as she noticed Donkey's tiredness.

"It wasn't easy, but we managed to get Funky's plane out and repaired," Donkey replied with a shrug. "How are you doing with your schoolworks?"

"We haven't even half of it," Diddy replied.

"I'll keep helping you. Oh, and I have good news for you," Donkey said excitedly.

"Will Wrinkly return to teach us?" Diddy asked, smiling along with Dixie.

"No, it's not that; she and Cranky won't come yet," he replied, lowering his tone, but smiling at them again. "The good news is that we're going on vacation too!"

"Really? When?" Diddy and Dixie asked, instantly excited.

"When your school year is over. And we'll *all* leave; we'll give Cranky and Wrinkly a surprise visit to where they went.

"Hey, but if we all leave... what if King K. Rool comes back?" Diddy asked with some concern. "And the banana reserve?"

"Don't worry, we have reinforced security at the entrance of the reserve. And we gave that foolish lizard a big beating that neither he nor his minions have been here for a long time," Donkey replied, calming the two kongs. "Well, now let's continue with your pyramids, friends."

The three continued to work on the pyramids. They had such a great time that after so much work they started playing video games and, later, Donkey offered to prepare something to eat and the two little kongs also helped him. They didn't completely finish the pyramids, but they did leave them quite advanced; they only lacked some finishes that they could put each one to their liking and they would already be finished. Now they would only have to receive Mr. Pinky's approval.

On the other hand, Diddy failed to tell Dixie that he liked her. The moment he was about to do it, he was attacked again by those doubts of what would happen if he said it.

In the evening, Dixie said goodbye and left for her home. She would also have wanted to confess to Diddy how she feels, but she also didn't want to sound so desperate if she said it, so she preferred to wait for him to take the first step... or at least that's what she thought.

Later, Donkey was talking to Diddy after he told him what happened that afternoon.

"Are you serious, Diddy?" Donkey exclaimed, crossing his arms. "How instead of telling her that you like her, you told her that you liked her pyramid?"

"It's the first thing that came to mind, I'm sorry, I couldn't do it at the time, Donkey," Diddy replied all frustrated.

"You just had to tell her you like her and that's all."

"But it's not that easy," Diddy said as he climbed into his tire. "I don't know how to do it. Didn't you feel that way before you told Candy your feelings?"

"Well... I understand you too, it's actually not as easy as it sounds," Donkey replied, smiling a little and sighing.

"What else could I do, Donkey?" Diddy wondered, leaning back on the tire. "I don't think I'm brave enough to tell her."

Donkey looked at his little nephew with some compassion, and turned to him to speak better.

"Listen, little buddy... I know it's hard to confess, but if you want that to happen, you have to tell her; it's the only thing you can do if you want to take the first steps with her. Besides, as I told you, you already have enough with her to take that risk."

"What if she tells me she doesn't feel the same way and gets angry with me?" Diddy replied fearfully.

"You'll never know if you don't find out," Donkey replied for the umpteenth time with a shrug. "What if she likes you too and is waiting for you to tell her? Girls don't always take the first step,

sometimes they just give you signs. By the way, haven't you thought that yesterday's gift is one of those *signs*?... Didn't she say that you are *someone special* to her?"

"Yes, but I don't think she said it in that sense, I already told you that it's just a friendly gift. Friends also give each other gifts, don't they?"

"Well, according to what I've seen, she's especially behaved only with you," he said, tickling him a little. "Come on, what if then it's too late and you won't have any more chances with her?"

Diddy, after laughing at the tickling, just gave Donkey a look of insecurity and thought for a few seconds. He really wanted something to happen with Dixie, but he still didn't feel quite ready to confess and take a first step with her.

"I'll try again, Donkey," he said before sighing. "I'll see if I can do it."

Chapter 16: An Emerald

The next day, Diddy was arriving at Kong Kollege with the advance of the pyramid in his hands. This time, he would have to be as careful as possible that none of his four annoying classmates appeared; although a long time ago he no longer had confrontations with them, he also didn't want to trust himself from them when he had some homework or some school project that was in view of that group.

Then, Dixie arrived also with her pyramid in her hands and met with Diddy.

"Hi, Diddy."

"How are you, Dixie?" he replied cheerfully. "Did you finish your pyramid?"

"Not yet, I'm going to put more stones around here," Dixie pointed out in small corners of her pyramid. "Oh, yes, and I'm also planning to paint it-"

"Hey!" one of their classmates suddenly appeared before them. "Can you come for a while? There is a surprise... Well, to Dixie specifically."

This time, it wasn't one of the bad kids, but of the rest of Kong Kollege's students, which was strange to Diddy and Dixie since they almost didn't speak to them, much less telling them that there was a *surprise* for one of the two of them.

"Excuse me, what's it's about?" asked Dixie, looking at him strangely.

"Just go, they're calling you," the kong child replied to Dixie.

Diddy and Dixie continued to look at him the same way, but they were also curious to know what it was, so they went where they were told. They crossed a few trees until they reached Kong Kollege's yard, when suddenly...

"Surprise!" Rocky, Mandrew and Melenky appeared in front of Dixie.

"Wait, we didn't have to say that," Melenky said.

"Uhh. Hey, Dixie, you have to watch this," Rocky said, pulling her arm along with the other two. "Come here."

"But what?! What?" Dixie asked, trying to resist them. "Oh, no..." she added, rolling her eyes after noticing the scene in front of her.

In the middle of the schoolyard, there was Jemky, who this time was holding a huge bouquet of flowers... In fact, one almost the same size as Dixie. The orangutan boy adjusted his vest as he headed towards Dixie with the huge bouquet, which only made her eyes twist again; it wasn't the first time Jemky had made such details toward her. Even Diddy used to twist his eyes and look with disgust at those details that Jemky had with her.

"Hello, Dixie," Jemky said, smiling. "I have something for you, pretty."

"Jemky, I've already told you thousands of times-"

"Hey, wait, just watch this," he interrupted, smiling and grabbing her arm, which Dixie immediately pushed away.

Suddenly, Rocky, Mandrew and Melenky carried a medium-sized box, which was quite decorated and had a few jewels in it. Jemky took the box while the other three held the huge bouquet of flowers.

"Look what I brought you," Jemky said as he showed her the box and showed the jewels, which were very bright. "I bought them just for you, pretty. They made me think of you because they are as beautiful as you are. Every time I see you-"

"Hey," Melenky interrupted. "Aren't those jewels the ones we steal from the newlyweds?"

"*Melenky!*" exclaimed the other three kids, throwing a withering look.

"Hey, don't listen to him, it's not true," Jemky whispered to Dixie before speaking to her normally again. "As I was saying, baby, I just wanted to tell you if," he added as he knelt before her and held out the gift box, "would you agree to date me?"

"Ugh, you don't understand!" exclaimed Dixie instantly. "I have repeated to you thousands of times that *I don't love you* and I won't date you!"

"Hey, but why?!" Jemky exclaimed, holding out the box with the jewels and holding her hand. "Come on, at least take this gift, and no, don't reject it, it's yours."

"*No!* I've already told you *no!*" replied Dixie, removing her hand away as she held her pyramid.

"Hey, but it's a gif-"

"Leave her already!" came in Diddy to defend. "Don't bother her."

"You don't mess around, dwarf monkey!" Jemky exclaimed, pushing Diddy.

"Don't tell him like that or I'll split your face!" Dixie replied, nudging Jemky with one hand and defending Diddy.

Dixie was about to start fighting, when suddenly, the rest of the kong children in the class began to arrive to see what was happening. Everyone watched curiously, since a "romantic" detail seemed to catch their attention and murmur about it.

"Look, again a loving proposal!" they whispered among themselves looking at the scene sideways.

"I bet she will say yes to him this time!" they added while laughing quietly.

"*What?! No!*" Dixie, who was clearly listening to what they were saying, exclaimed. "Stop-"

"Oh, yes, of course!" Jemky interrupted, taking Dixie's forearm again and kneeling back before her. "Tell me, Dixie... Do you agree to date me, pretty?"

Dixie didn't lack the desire to beat Jemky so he would leave her alone, but in the presence of the rest of her classmates, she couldn't do it, which only annoyed her much more.

"I repeat to you that no! Understand it!" Dixie whispered between teeth in a threatening tone. "I'm going to give you-"

"Oh, come on, don't be like that," Jemky interrupted, holding out the box to her. "Open the box at least, look at what's inside!"

"What for or what?" Dixie asked, on the verge of losing her patience. "It's a trap, right?"

"No, just open it!" he replied, trying to hand her the box insistently. "Look at what's inside."

Dixie pushed aside the gift box while Jemky insisted on handing it over and over again. Until later, he opened the box in front of her face, so Dixie pushed it away in the opposite direction. Instantly, a large number of pieces of colorful papers shot out of the box as an explosion, at the same time a balloon came into view; the latter was also decorated and had "*I love you, Dixie*" written inside a heart.

Suddenly, Dixie stared in the direction of the balloon, with an apparent impression.

"Ah, is it true that you liked the surprise, Dixie?" Jemky said, looking up repeatedly. "And look at what's inside: more jewelry!" he added, taking other shiny jewelry inside the box. But suddenly, Jemky noticed that not only Dixie, but also Diddy, kept looking in the direction of the balloon. "Huh? What's wrong?"

Diddy and Dixie showed a forced smile with their teeth, while repeatedly pointing behind everyone. The kids turned to look at what they were pointing out and, to their surprise, it was none other than Mr. Pinky, who had his head stamped from the pieces of colorful papers that had shot out of the box, apart from his fixed and hard gaze that he frequently brought.

Jemky turned his head again and dropped the box to the floor while maintaining a forced smile not knowing what to do.

"Good morning, sir students!" Mr. Pinky pronounced firmly. "Class is about to begin! Everyone to the classroom!" he added as he subtly shook the pieces of paper from his head with an expression about to burst.

Immediately, all the students began to walk towards the classroom. Everyone took tense steps and didn't utter a word.

"Mr. Jemky and company!" the teacher exclaimed to the quartet, and then pointed to the box with the pieces of paper lying on the floor. "Kindly clean all this up!"

The quartet, although tense at first, stopped very reluctantly to collect everything as ordered by the teacher, while the rest of the students entered the classroom.

"Stupid Dixie," Jemky muttered as he collected everything. "I know she liked the gift but she pretends that not."

"I told you she was going to turn it down to you," Melenky said with a laugh. "Girls no longer pay attention to you as before your last breakup, accept it."

"At least I wasn't cheated on with three ones like your ex-girlfriend did to you," Jemky replied to Melenky, infuriating him.

"Don't go that far, Jemky," Rocky said with a shrug. "Your last girlfriend agreed to break up with you along with the others, so don't call yourself a winner."

"Hey, Rocky, and neither do you," Mandrew added. "You were your ex-girlfriend's *other* boyfriend and you didn't even know it."

"Shut up! That yours left you for someone uglier than you," Rocky replied, earning a slap from the mandrill boy.

"Anyway, I know that someday Dixie will love me," Jemky added with a smile again. "Perhaps I should give her a better gift to convince her, and at least she must think I'm handsome."

"Yes, but the truth is that the one she really loves is Diddy," Rocky said.

"But if that dumb monkey doesn't pay attention to her," Jemky said, shrugging as he rolling his eyes. "He doesn't seem so in love that he wants to conquer her. That fool doesn't even do any detail for her."

"Well, because the monkey is like a coward," said Mandrew.

On the other hand, Diddy and Dixie, in a disguised way, released the laughter they had been holding since they saw the teacher's face stamped with papers.

Then, with everyone already inside the classroom, the class began, but not before the students received a stern look from Mr. Pinky.

"Well, sir students! Today I will review your project progress that I asked for! But first, I will ask some questions!" he exclaimed firmly. After a moment of silence, he turned to the quartet of bully children. "By the way, Mr. Jemky... from this very moment, you start solving one hundred mathematical exercises because of the antic you just did!"

"B-but Mr. Pinky, it was an accident, it won't happen again," Jemky replied with a forced smile. "Moreover, it was Dixie who pushed the box in your direction."

"According to what I saw, she was just pushing it away at your insistence, so you are to blame!" he replied, pointing at him. "So, start to work right now!"

"Ah, what if I don't do it?" Jemky asked with a shrug, which only made Mr. Pinky's face change to a red color of fury.

"I'll make you do two hundred, or else I'll fail you!" the teacher exclaimed, raising his voice and frightening Jemky. *"Beware of that attitude, Mr. Jemky!"*

After the reprimand, both Diddy and Dixie smiled victoriously, and for a moment they felt comfortable that Mr. Pinky was there. While Jemky only rolled his eyes while looking towards Dixie for the umpteenth rejection he received from her.

Later, Mr. Pinky began teaching his class. As in previous days, all the students were tense at the lessons of their strict new teacher. On that day, everyone was to bring their pyramid advances to be inspected by the teacher, as he had mentioned.

"Mr. Melenky! Tell me what photosynthesis is!" said the teacher with a fixed gaze towards Melenky.

"Uhh... taking pictures of a synthesis?" Melenky replied without knowing the answer.

"I don't want incoherent answers. *You got a zero!*" exclaimed the teacher, pulling out his notebook and jotting down. "Mr. Mandrew! Tell me the answer!"

"Uhh, is it when plants eat?" Mandrew replied in the same way as Melenky.

"Almost, but I want a better formulated answer! Zero too!... Miss Dixie! Answer the question!"

"Is it... the process in which plants make their own food with organic matter?" Dixie replied tremblingly.

"Correct!" said the teacher, before writing down and leaving his notebook on the desk. Afterwards, he turned towards the students. "Now I want to see how you are doing with your final projects!"

All the students began to take out their pyramids: many of them were well made with creative details... with the exception of those of the quartet of Jemky and company; those were the simplest that, just by seeing them, it was almost likely that the teacher would send them to repeat them, the only thing that stood out were the jewels that had been put on them... and that they had surely been stolen by the four of them.

Mr. Pinky passed through each of the posts to inspect the pyramid works. Most were approved, while others, for small mistakes, were sent to repeat.

"Where are your advances, Messrs. Mandrew, Melenky, Jemky, and Rocky?!" he asked the four sternly.

Each one of the quartet took out their pyramids, while Mr. Pinky observed them carefully and frowned with an expression of sternness.

"Messrs. Mandrew, Melenky and Rocky's are not bad, but they still have to work on some details and change several pieces... The jewels look great, in fact," he said earnestly, before pausing. "But Mr. Jemky's... He has to repeat it!"

"What?! But it took me a long time to do it," replied Jemky.

"A pile of earth with stones around it doesn't take three minutes to make!" he said, raising his voice while describing Jemky's pyramid as it looked, which was the simplest of all.

"But, Mr. Pinky-"

"You still have time to do it, or else you will be *failed!*" he interrupted, pointing firmly, and leaving him paralyzed. "I see that, to make those *loving details*, you do put more dedication."

Then, Mr. Pinky stopped by Diddy and Dixie. Both pyramids were almost finished, and they only needed to place the jewels at the top. But these two had a tense look at the teacher as he looked closely at their works and frowned too much. The two were only afraid that the teacher would tell them that the pyramids were poorly made and send them to repeat them.

"Not bad!" the teacher said to them after a long silence. "Keep it up! Just don't forget to put your jewelry on them, guys."

Diddy and Dixie smiled at each other when the teacher said that, and felt enormous relief, while the quartet of bullies looked at them with disgust to see that they had done well. The teacher continued to inspect the work of the rest of the class, until later, he let them all out and the day ended.

Everyone was leaving the classroom. The group of the four bad children could no longer bother Diddy and Dixie much because the new teacher had them well guarded like a security guard, because he always wanted to make sure that the children went home and avoid any mishap.

"What will you put at the top of the pyramid, Dixie?" asked Diddy as he walked alongside Dixie with the pyramids and placed that emerald on his.

"I have some pearls in my house that I found with Tiny; those I will put on it."

"Hey, can we ask you something?" Jemky said, appearing with the group behind the two.

Both Diddy and Dixie clung their pyramids to themselves after sensing the presence of the quartet nearby.

"Yeah?" Diddy said, turning and looking at them strangely.

"How did you make those pyramids?" Jemky asked, pointing to them.

"With our hands," Dixie replied mockingly.

"Oh, please, it's serious," Rocky replied, arms crossed. "We don't know how to do them well, that's why we asked you."

"We made them with wood, dirt and a few tree branches," Dixie replied again. "And that's it."

"We cut pieces of wood from large to smaller sizes and put them in order," Diddy added.

"Then we'll paint them a little and put some stones on the top," Dixie continued. "That's all," she finished with a shrug.

The four of them got a little closer and began to observe carefully the pyramids of the two, while they remained attentive to any suspicious movement of the four.

"Hmm, it doesn't look difficul- Ops, I'm sorry!" Jemky exclaimed when he touched Diddy's pyramid and moved a piece of it.

Instantly, Diddy and Dixie moved their pyramids away from the four in disgust, while also being grateful that their teacher was present watching in the distance.

"Wait a minute," Mandrew said, looking intently at Diddy's pyramid. "Is that an... *emerald*?"

"An emerald?!" said the other three kids in unison and astonished. Diddy and Dixie looked at them with great strangeness at their reaction. "I want to see it!"

Suddenly, the four began to push each other to take the emerald from Diddy's pyramid that, when touched, took it off a little.

"No, get out!" Diddy exclaimed, pushing the four of them aside and protecting his pyramid.

"Hey, let me see it!" exclaimed Jemky, suddenly grabbing the emerald until it was torn off.

"Hey, what's wrong with you?!" Diddy replied, trying to snatch it from him along with Dixie.

"Let that, you robbers!" Dixie ordered them, managing to snatch it from them. "This is from Diddy!"

"We just want to see it!" Mandrew exclaimed, trying to take it off again.

"I said no!" Diddy replied by pushing his hands away from it.

Diddy and Dixie immediately walked away from the quartet upon seeing their kleptomaniac attitudes; it could have started another two-on-four fight that they hadn't had for a long time, but the Mr. Pinky's constant vigilance prevented it. Until later, both began to run towards their homes.

But in the meantime, the quartet of bully kids stared at Diddy and Dixie from a distance, especially... they seemed to observe their pyramids.

"Hey... did you notice that emerald that the lizard monkey has?" Mandrew whispered to the group, without looking away from the pyramid of Diddy, who was already far away with Dixie.

"It looks a lot like... the ones Dad always mentions," Rocky added in the same way. "It's that same shade of green: that dark and bright."

"Or did the monkey steal it from our dads?!" Melenky exclaimed.

"Don't be silly, that monkey is no use for that, nor does he know our dads," Jemky replied before pausing. "Even so, that stone doesn't look bad at all."

"That's true," Melenky added. "It's so bright and dark green... And our dads are looking for one like that."

"Hey... We need it!" exclaimed Jemky. "We have to steal it from that monkey! What do you say? And with that maybe our dads will be happy and take us with them to hunt monsters."

"But how did we steal it from them? We have no way," Rocky replied. "We don't even know where the monkey lives... Nor do we have weapons to steal it by force either."

"There must be a way," Jemky said pensively. "Perhaps we can steal it from them by *ourselves*."

"We don't have weapons," Rocky repeated. "Even our dads already have them well hidden from us."

"Exactly," Jemky added, shrugging. "But anyway, we could do it..."

"What if we go right now and snatch it away from them?" Mandrew suggested.

"No, I would say the last day of school," Melenky added. "We can take it away from them between all of us and in a better way."

"I don't think that monkey will let that stone be stolen easily, other than Dixie will run us away with her hair," Jemky said, before becoming pensive. "We could try it in a good way first, do you think?"

"What are you saying with a 'good way'?" Mandrew asked strangely.

"Well, *in a good way*," Jemky said with a shrug. "In order not to get into so much trouble here or be given away, we could first try it in a peaceful way... Hmm, I think I know how."

After noon, Dixie was walking home, with the pyramid in her hands. She was all quiet, until she could hear someone following her; it could have been Diddy who would come looking for her for something at school or to go for a walk, or it could have been her sister or her cousins playing a joke on her, but no... to her torment, it was the orangutan boy of the quartet.

"Hi, Dixie," Jemky appeared, speaking to her in a cheerful tone.

"What the heck are you doing around here?" Dixie exclaimed, showing alertness and protecting her pyramid firmly.

"Don't worry, I'm not here to steal your pyramid, baby," he said, approaching to give her a hug. "I come to steal your heart," he said before winking.

"Get out of here!" she exclaimed, giving him a push.

"Oh, what's up? Are you waiting for that useless Diddy to tell you that?" he told her before laughing in a mocking way.

Instantly, Dixie blushed and was enraged at the same time by the tasteless joke.

"Look, shut up!"

"You can't wait your whole life for him, what if... you date me instead?" he said with a playful look and trying to hug her. "You'll do much better with me, baby. I'd do anything for you."

Dixie had had enough of such insistences on Jemky's part, and would beat him up if she didn't have to protect her pyramid.

"Leave me alone!" Dixie replied. "Don't you have anything better to do?! *Don't you get loved or cared for in your home?!*"

As if all at once, those last words seemed to have silenced Jemky... who even changed his mischievous face to one as if he were a simple offended child. Even Dixie gestured at his sudden change.

"Oh... I-I'm sorry," Dixie said as she noticed him. "Well, I did mean it, but... sorry if it's true," she added with a forced smile.

"Uhh, no, it's okay," Jemky replied, smiling a little... although with different gestures than he was a few seconds ago.

"Uh, no, no, really... I'm sorry," Dixie apologized, not knowing what to really say when she saw Jemky's expression.

In the face of the awkward moment, Dixie just turned around and continued on her way home.

"Uh, hey, w-wait, Dixie!" Jemky called her again, running towards her.

"What do you want?" Dixie asked, looking at him oddly and returning to protect her pyramid.

"Well, okay, Dixie. I just wanted to ask you for help, can you?" he said with a smiling look.

"I don't accept dates, I have already repeated it to you," replied Dixie, pushing him aside and continuing on her way.

"No, no, it's not that. I just wanted to tell you if you could... tell me how those pyramids are made," he said with a forced smile and a pleading look.

"Is it serious?" Dixie replied, looking at him strangely and stopping. "And can't you ask me directly instead of with your pathetic flirts?" she added, rolling her eyes.

"Oh, well," replied Jemky. "I just want you to explain that to me, *please*, we really need to know... Now I'm telling you directly, okay?"

"Look, I'll write the instructions on a piece of paper, okay?... But then you get out of here!"

Dixie put her pyramid aside, and then took out a pencil and a sheet of paper from her backpack. She sat on a nearby rock to write down all the instructions of how she and Diddy had made the pyramids, at least so that Jemky would leave her alone at once.

"Oh, you're so cute, Dixie," Jemky said, playfully taking her hair. But instantly, Dixie grabbed his wrist tightly to speak to him.

"You behave or I give you your comeuppance right now!" Dixie replied between teeth and in a threatening tone.

"Oh, well, well, okay, okay," Jemky replied, rubbing his wrist.

Dixie continued to write on the sheet of paper, while Jemky sat near her to wait. Obviously, she was trying to write as fast as she could to get Jemky out of the way. When suddenly... what she had answered to Jemky a few minutes ago came to her mind and, being overcome with curiosity after remembering the expression he made, it occurred to her to ask him some questions in particular.

"Hey, Jemky," she called him as she wrote.

"Yeah?"

"Can I ask you a question?"

"Huh? No, I don't have a girlfriend now in case you ask me," he said, giving her a little push playfully.

"No, not that! It's just... I've always wanted to ask you something," Dixie said, stopping writing. "You four... why are you the way you are?" she asked, looking at him seriously, which earned a strange look from Jemky. "I mean, why did you treat Diddy badly and are doing inappropriate things?... Do you really have no control in your homes or *something*?"

For the first time, Dixie had launched into asking something like that directly to one of her bully classmates: why they liked to annoy so much and be evil.

"And what does that question come to?" Jemky asked, looking at her more strangely.

"I just want to know," Dixie replied with a shrug. "I mean, why do you behave like that?... Is no one really paying attention to you or have you had any inconvenience in your homes?"

With the last thing she asked, it only made Jemky's face take on a low and quite serious expression immediately, apparently, never seen on him before. Jemky even looked at Dixie this time as if she had said something offensive to him.

"Uh! Look, Dixie, I don't think I can give you a clear answer to all that," he replied, resuming the same expression he had made a few minutes ago. "But as for why we make fun of you, it's because you are two weirdos to us, that's it. Diddy was our friend before, but he didn't want to follow our games, he was a coward and didn't want to do anything we did, and also, we see that you're his *little friend*, you just walk with and defend him."

"Is it serious? It's the most incoherent excuse I've ever heard," Dixie replied with a serious look. "But then... Who educated you four? Don't you have your parents? I mean, neither do we, but we don't do bad things like you... Or do you four live alone?"

"Well... we just live with our dads," Jemky said, speaking with total seriousness. "Although they rarely spend time with us."

"What? Really?" Dixie asked again. "And why?"

"They always have to go to work for long days. They only bring us gifts when they return and leave us food for long periods, since we barely see them when we wake up and at bedtime. Only occasionally do they stay with us all day."

"Really? And... your moms?"

"We don't have moms. Dad told us that they abandoned us when we were babies. That's why our dads only spend working to give us a better life, according to them," he replied before giving a sigh and lowering his gaze. "But... the truth is that they only spend us scolding and punishing, lately they even treat us as if we were a burden to them and not as their children."

"I didn't know that. But at least you do have your dads," Dixie replied in a low tone. "And... I can ask what kind of *work they* have?... Aren't they thugs or something, just in case?"

"They go hunting giant monsters and take them to labs. We've always wanted them to take us, but they never do; it's like they keep it a secret. They tell us that they would only take us with them if we do something good that impresses them, but... we always try to do something good for them and we never seem enough to them."

"Wow... I didn't know that either. And is it true that you were once given guns for your birthdays?"

"Oh, those guns... We had actually stolen from our dads, but you know, Diddy threw them into the sea and ruined our game. And you cannot imagine the great beating that our dads gave us when they found out that we had lost them; from there they restricted us from many things and I think they have become more severe with us than before."

"Oh... That doesn't sound good at all," Dixie said in a tone of earnestness. "Hey, but then... haven't your dads educated you? That is... don't they share time with you at least to have taught you good

manners and so on?"

Jemky just gave Dixie another strange look, as if she had asked him a question he didn't know how to answer.

"I don't know what you're talking about," he replied, shrugging and making a gesture of disgust. "But at least as far as I can remember... our dads hardly have spent time with us. I just can say that in almost all the time we have been living, they have always left us alone in other places where other ones supposedly would take care of us while they were working."

"Really?" Dixie asked again with a look of surprise as well, but increasing her curiosity. "And... what kind of places did your dads leave you in?"

"Uhh... Well... Ugh, in some dreadful places," he replied reluctantly, recovering a little to his normal tone. "Anyway, enough talking, girl, I just have come to you to explain to me better how that pyramid is made."

"But then you didn't have your dads present with you?" she continued asking him.

"Look, I don't even know why I'm talking to you about this," Jemky replied, shrugging and serious again. "I only came for the pyramid, and that's it."

Dixie just looked at him seriously and strangely at the same time; as far as she remembered, she had never seen one of those children talking like that. She was still curious about the topic, but decided not to wind it up anymore for the time being, so she just continued to write the instructions of the pyramid.

Meanwhile, Jemky remained silent and was waiting for Dixie. His expression only showed absolute seriousness, although then seemed to fade and return to being as at the beginning.

"Hey, Dixie... I also wanted to ask you something else," Jemky said, turning to look at her later. "Diddy had an *emerald in his pyramid*, right?... Do you know where he got it?"

Dixie looked at him strangely again at that question; she was about to answer him, but preferred to spare herself the explanation in case any inconvenience would arise.

"Well... I don't know, he bought it himself," Dixie replied, lying and shrugging.

"Really? And where?" Jemky asked again.

"I don't know either," Dixie replied as she continued to write. "I think he bought it a long time ago. Why?"

"Uhh... No, I was just asking," he replied, shrugging and looking away. "Or well... The truth is that there is something I wanted to propose to you, what would you say?"

"I don't give dates," Dixie said bluntly as she continued to write.

"No, not that. It's rather... a proposal for you and Diddy," he said with a forced smile.

"And now what do you want?" Dixie asked him without looking straight at him.

"Well, I wanted to ask you if... could you tell Diddy to give us that emerald?" he said with an apparent look of pleading. Dixie looked at him weirdly immediately at such a sudden question that seemed somewhat shameless. "I-I mean, not exactly that he *gives* it to us, but rather... that he gives us that *emerald*, and we in return will give him other shiny stones for his pyramid, even one for you too... What do you say, Dixie?"

Dixie only gave him a stern look of weirdness. She thought that he was being so brazen and daring to come and tell her out of nowhere to give him that emerald, which she and Diddy had already seen was generating a certain wake-up call in those evil children.

"What are you talking about?" Dixie said to him with the same weird expression. "Diddy won't accept that, forget it. He's not going to give it to you like that."

"Hey, but I'm not saying that he just gives it to us, I just told you that we want to *exchange* it for other shiny jewels that we have, it's just that."

"And why would we want more jewelry? Diddy already has that emerald, and I also have chosen some pearls for my pyramid."

"Come on," Jemky exclaimed, giving her a little push and a look of supplication. "I'm saying we want to make an exchange for you two, we're not demanding you or anything."

"Jemky, that's not going to happen," Dixie replied. "I don't know what this is about, but honestly, the answer to that proposal is *no*."

"Oh, but why? That emerald is very beautiful, we'll want it for our pyramids, don't you want to help us?"

"Well, if you say you have more shiny jewels, so *wear those*," she replied again. "The emerald is something important to Diddy; we're not going to give it to you four, you're crazy."

"But we'll give in return for you two a lot of shiny stones better than that! You're going to have more."

"No, I said no!" Dixie exclaimed, raising her voice firmly. "And better not insist or I'll throw you out of here."

"Ugh, but how stubborn you always are, Dixie," Jemky said, his hands at his sides and rolled eyes.

Dixie rolled her eyes too, downplayed it, and just continued to write down the instructions. Meanwhile, Jemky leaned on the same rock to wait, but in turn, he stared silently at Dixie and smiled at her.

"Hey, Dixie... and do you really like that fool monkey Diddy?" he asked her with a mocking smile later.

"And what do you care about," Dixie replied without looking up as she continued to write. "And Diddy is not a fool."

"Maybe that monkey doesn't really love you," he said with a mocking laugh. "He doesn't even try to get close to you or anything."

Instantly, Dixie rolled her eyes and tried to restrain herself so as not to give Jemky his comeuppance at that comment. Meanwhile, he kept looking at her with a sweet look.

"Oh, Dixie... You're really so pretty," he said, gently grabbing her hair. "You could give me a chance instead, I-"

Immediately, Dixie gave him a withering look and pushed him away hard. She then reluctantly handed him the paper with the instructions by sticking it to his face, before finally retiring, even without having finished writing.

"Thank you, Dixie," Jemky replied, smiling and taking the sheet. "*Precious*," he added before winking at her and then leaving, but not before being slapped by her.

Dixie rolled her eyes again and kept walking home with the pyramid in her hands. She turned to see if Jemky had already left, and fortunately he was; she couldn't stand him anymore. Even so, at that moment she began to think about the conversation she had had with him; she didn't remember talking like that to any of those evil children or seeing them that way. She wondered what kind of family and environment these children would have had to be misbehaving now. However, she didn't know if anything more could be known about them, so she downplayed it afterwards.

Later, Dixie arrived at her house. She knocked on the door, and was greeted by her sister, who greeted her immediately.

"Dixie! How is it going?" Tiny said as Dixie entered the house. "How did you do with the pyramid?"

"Everything went well so far," Dixie replied, smiling as she left it on a table. "The new teacher just told me that I should put the jewel on it, you know, the pearls you told me."

"Didn't he send you to repeat it?" Chunky asked, also arriving at the scene. "Since you said that that new teacher is a grump."

"No, not at all," Dixie replied with a shrug. "He was very good to us."

"And Diddy? How did it go to him?" Tiny asked.

"The teacher also approved it to him; he just told him that he is doing well."

"And... did he put that emerald?" Tiny asked, curiously.

"Yes, he did. It seems that he has considered it," Dixie said smiling.

"And didn't he tell you anything *important*?" asked Tiny again with a mischievous look.

Suddenly, Dixie changed her expression, showing a face of some frustration in her.

"No... I think he didn't understand that," Dixie replied in a low tone. "I don't know what else to do. I told him what that emerald meant, but he didn't seem to get it... He even always says that if we dated, it would be weird or silly."

"Hey, maybe he says that to disguise," Chunky said with a shrug. "Surely he must be thinking at some point to tell you that he likes you."

"Yes, he may not be ready yet," Tiny added. "But maybe at any moment he will show up with flowers and a huge gift to ask you to be his girlfriend," she said, jumping with excitement.

"Ugh! If the only one making that bad joke is that crazy orangutan," replied Dixie, rolling her eyes. "In fact, this morning he did it again."

"That ugly orangutan boy again?" Chunky asked with a frowning look. "Doesn't he give up?"

"Or why don't you give him a chance to see what that boy is like?" Tiny said innocently and unknowing of the context of those children. "Don't you think he's cute?" she added with a little laugh.

"Ugh, no, what are you saying?" Dixie replied in a disgusted tone. "He may have his appearance, but he's a braggart, believe me."

"Or what if you tell Diddy yourself that you like him?" Chunky suggested with a shrug. "And that's all."

"What? No, not that!" Dixie replied. "I don't think that's a good idea. That would be... weird."

"But why?" Chunky exclaimed, hands at his sides. "Wouldn't that be the most convenient?"

"Hey, no, Chunky," Tiny added. "Dixie isn't the one to do that, she can't be that fast."

"Exactly, he's supposed to be the one to tell me, isn't he? I don't want him to think I'm hasty or he might get scared."

"Hey, but with Diddy it's more than clear," Chunky said with a shrug. "Dixie, haven't you ever thought about what would happen if you better tell him once and for all?"

"No!" Tiny replied. "Girls can't confess like that to boys, that scares them."

"Well, Chunky doesn't think Diddy will be scared," Chunky added. "So, Dixie can tell him without problems."

"No, no, I'm not going to do that," Dixie reaffirmed firmly. "No way... Oh, but I don't know what to do either," she added, looking down. "How am I supposed to take the first step with Diddy?"

Chunky looked at her with folded arms and serious, while Tiny pensively, which made Dixie shrug and sigh.

"No, no, there has to be a way anyway," Dixie said, moving her head from side to side. "Maybe I can give him some other gift or tell him in some other way so that he will understand it."

"Oh, you'll see it's not going to work that way," Chunky said with a shrug. "If you are not more direct, you won't see results or even you could lose the opportunity with him."

"No, what are you saying?" replied Dixie, her hands at her sides. "Of course I can try another way."

"Yeah, boys are scared when a girl tells them she likes him," Tiny added. "They can only be given signals."

"Yes, I wouldn't even say that directly," Dixie said as she began to walk to her room. "Or what would you do?"

"Well... Chunky knows nothing about love," Chunky replied with a shrug. "Although thinking about it, I think you should just tell him."

"I don't know what I would do either, really," Tiny added in the same way. "Although... maybe you just have to wait a little longer for him to confess to you, Dixie."

"But he doesn't even show signs of wanting to say it to me," Dixie replied with some frustration, before continuing to walk. "Anyway, and where is Kiddy?"

"He's sleeping," Chunky replied. "Not long ago he took his lunch."

Dixie nodded and shrugged, before continuing upstairs to go to the rooms.

Chapter 17: Frustration

It was the last day of school in that week and there was only one more day left in the following week to start the vacation. Dixie was walking in front of Kong Kollege and, minutes later, Diddy also arrived to greet each other.

"Diddy, do you know what we're going to do the other week?" Dixie asked with emotion.

"We're going on the vacation trip!" Diddy exclaimed in the same tone. "Have you already told Tiny, Kiddy and Chunky?"

"Of course, they're super excited. We haven't had any vacations like that in years."

"We're leaving!" they said in unison, high-fiving their hands with emotion.

"Oh, right, Dixie, I wanted to ask you also if we could go to the waterfalls today; there is... something I wanted to show you," Diddy said, smiling at her.

"Oh, okay. I'll see you this afternoon then," she replied smiling. "Are you going to show me somewhere new?"

"No, it's not a new place. It's just... Well, you'll see. It's an important thing."

"Anything important?" she asked curiously. "About what?"

"You'll find out later," Diddy finished with a smile.

They both continued to walk towards the classroom. This time, they were calm knowing that it was their last days in that school year, and they could not wait any longer to enjoy the vacations.

"How about it, you pair of mangy lizards?" Mandrew told them, passing by them along with the group.

Diddy and Dixie turned to look at the quartet in an annoyed way.

"Hi, lousy ape faces," Dixie replied in a mocking tone.

"Lousy apes," Melenky added, imitating her and making a mocking gesture. "Numbskull girl!"

"You are numbskulls!" contradicted Diddy in defense.

"Ohh, you are defending your... *little girlfriend*," Rocky added, and the others began to laugh mockingly... except for Jemky, who just looked at the two by rolling his eyes.

"Shut up!" Diddy exclaimed, annoyed at the reckless comment.

"Hey, monkey, seriously," Melenky continued, with every intention of annoying them. "Is she your girlfriend?" he added, pointing to Dixie.

Diddy and Dixie wanted to beat them up to shut up at once.

"No, and don't talk nonsense!" replied Diddy.

"Yeah, yeah, 'nonsense' you say," Mandrew exclaimed mockingly. "We'll see the two of you together."

"Ugh, you are so annoying!" replied Diddy, trying to downplay the matter. "Dixie is only my friend; I'd never see her any other way!"

"Ohhh!" the four exclaimed in an uproar tone at Diddy's answer.

Dixie, on the other hand, showed a sneaky frustrated look at Diddy.

"What?" Diddy exclaimed, confused to see that everyone looked at him in different ways.

"Good morning, sir students!" Mr. Pinky appeared, calling them all. "Class is about to begin! To the classroom everyone, please!"

The teacher went to the classroom to wait for his students to pass. His class began and continued normally. In short, he had been very strict, he spoke very firmly to the children and passed them to the front to solve complex exercises. But fortunately, that was already the last class of the school year; the following week they'd only have to submit their pyramids as final exams.

Later, the break hours had arrived, so all the kong children went out.

"Wait," Diddy said curiously as he was talking with Dixie in a corner. "Did Jemky really tell you that?... Tell me more."

"Yes, and that their dads work hunting giant monsters," Dixie murmured. "Oh, and that the guns you told me about, were actually stolen secretly from their dads, it was not that they gave them on their birthdays."

"I didn't know that," Diddy said. "When they were my friends, they had only told me that their dads hardly saw them, but nothing more. They didn't even want to mention them, so I didn't continue asking them anything about that."

"I wonder what they will really be like in their homes."

"Although I don't really know his parents, I haven't even seen them at school events... Wow, hunting giant monsters? What kind of job do their dads have? That sounds very... strange?"

"No idea, then he didn't want to tell me anything else. Even, Jemky didn't seem to feel so good about having told it."

"I mean, how would they go hunting giant monsters?" Diddy asked, smiling a little in confusion. "I thought their parents were thugs like them too or worse... And first, how could Jemky tell you something like that? I mean, unless he tried to approach you by telling you about his life or if you had accepted a date with him."

"Well, I answered him that way, and then his face totally changed. And since he was calm at that moment, I could ask him."

"I had only been told that their parents didn't spend that much time with them," Diddy said with a shrug. "They were even so evasive if I asked them anything about their lives. Anyway, I don't

understand how they could have learned to be the way they are.”

"And you know? In the end-"

"Ahh, how close together are you two again, huh?!" Mandrew appeared along with Melenky by surprise. "Are you already in love?"

"You're a couple!" Melenky exclaimed, pushing them both.

"No!" Dixie replied with an annoyed look. "What are you saying?!"

"Yeah, stop talking fallacies!" Diddy added in the same way. "We're friends!"

"But what *fallacies* are you talking about, monkey?" said Mandrew, staring at him in a mocking way. "If you like Dixie."

"What?!" Diddy exclaimed, defensively. "Hey, what are you talking about?!"

"Don't pretend you don't, we know you do like her," Melenky added, pushing him towards Dixie. "And you too, Dixie, you like Diddy!"

"Hey, what are you talking about?!" Dixie replied. "That's not true."

"Get together!" Mandrew exclaimed, pushing them both.

"Just say it, you are girlfriend and boyfriend!" Melenky continued.

"No, leave us!" Diddy replied, pushing them away. "You are saying antics!"

"Don't pretend, we know you do want to be together," Mandrew added, staring at them. "Let's see, what do you say, Dixie? Do you like Diddy?... Or do you like Jemky more?"

"What?!" Dixie exclaimed, looking at them strangely. "Hey, don't talk nonsense! I don't even like Jemky!"

"Ahh, but do you like Diddy then, huh?" Melenky said, giving her a little push.

"N-no!" Dixie exclaimed, trying not to blush. "He's just my friend!"

"Yes, *of course*, you only see him as a friend!" said Mandrew with a mischievous look, before giving Diddy a push. "Come on, Diddy, and what are you waiting for to take the first step?... Otherwise, Jemky will beat you."

"Urgh, stop talking nonsense!" Diddy replied, losing his patience. "I'd never see Dixie in that cloying way, no way!"

Both Dixie and Mandrew and Melenky made different gestures, especially the latter, who saw Dixie showing frustration clearly and as if she had been annoyed.

"Oops, that hurt me," Melenky murmured, looking away.

"I-I mean... I wouldn't see Dixie like that," Diddy replied, trying to look serious. "She's just my friend."

"Yes, whatever you say," Mandrew added with a fixed gaze. "But I bet you-"

"*Sir students!*" Mr. Pinky suddenly exclaimed from the door of the classroom. "Break is over! Everyone to the classroom, please!"

Instantly, the children stood still when they heard the teacher's voice, so they stopped everything they were doing and headed towards the classroom. Even Melenky and Mandrew had finally calmed down and changed their expressions as they walked tensely into the classroom.

Meanwhile, Diddy and Dixie were also heading towards the classroom... although Dixie seemed to be somewhat serious as she looked sideways at Diddy. Then, the class continued later.

In the final hours of the class, Mr. Pinky had put to do some mathematical exercises to the children. Some of them had already finished, while others were still solving them.

On the one hand, the bully children were with their tables gathered doing such schoolwork. But as they did that, they seemed to be looking sideways at Diddy and Dixie.

"Hey, fellows, and what time are we going to execute our plan with those two?" Mandrew whispered to his group, in an almost silent voice.

"I say be today, since we're going to stay here this afternoon," Rocky said in the same tone. "At least to make it more fun when leaving our extra classes."

"No, I say be the day after tomorrow," Melenky added. "Or by the way, the last day of classes, after we submit the pyramids."

"No, no, I say be from today," Jemky said. "Moreover, I will go to achieve the goal."

"No, we all together better go to, or I'm going," Rocky snapped.

"No, if we all go to, those two are going to give us away," Jemky said. "We would even only have to go for one of them."

"I say it because you always end up causing disasters or getting into trouble," Rocky replied.

"You relax, I know what to do," Jemky added. "In addition... maybe we should try it in a bad way."

"Messrs. Jemky and company!" Mr. Pinky exclaimed suddenly, catching the attention of the four children and leaving them paralyzed. "Don't forget this afternoon to stay for your extra classes."

"Oh, and do we really have to stay?" Jemky reluctantly replied.

"Of course, I've been telling you for two days, and today you must start. And you must also come tomorrow and the day after!"

"Hey, Mr. Pinky, but it's the weekend," Mandrew exclaimed in the same way. "Couldn't it be just today?"

"The three days are the ones that you must come!" replied Mr. Pinky firmly as he read some pages. "According to the reports of your grades this cycle: you are already *failed*, but that is not the worst... Your grades are even in danger so that you cannot access the recovery exams. Come and see this!"

The quartet, though tense at first, went to the teacher's desk and saw the sheet he was carrying.

"Just look here," the teacher pointed out. "Mr. Rocky can save his grades by attending the extra classes. Mr. Mandrew and Mr. Melenky must do the same, but separately, they must submit their pyramids to save themselves. And as for Mr. Jemky... I regret to say that to save himself, he'll have to submit a *well-made* pyramid, otherwise, he'll be directly out of the cycle."

"Hey, are you serious?" Jemky exclaimed, arms crossed. "So, we... Are we going to have to take those extra exams?"

"Yes, that's no matter what," the teacher added. "This weekend's extra classes are just to help you access those exams with Mrs. Wrinkly when she returns or at the start of the next cycle, otherwise, you'll be expelled and a report will be sent to your parents."

"Hey, mister, but isn't there anything else to do?" Rocky asked him in disgust. "And with our dads it's in vain; they won't want to come and even don't have time."

"Well, somehow that's going to be communicated to them! You are the ones who have the lowest performance here," replied the teacher, before looking at them more seriously. "Or perhaps... is there a problem in your homes or with you, kids?"

"What? Of course not, not at all," Jemky replied, looking at him strangely.

"Your parents... Do they pay attention to your school activities?" Mr. Pinky asked them, still looking at them seriously. "What do your parents do?"

"Well... they just spend working," Mandrew replied with a shrug. "They go hunting giant and exotic monsters."

"What?" exclaimed the teacher with a look of great strangeness at the response of those children. "And that... is a job? What kind of monsters? Have you seen them?"

"No, they never take us," Melenky replied with a shrug as well. "But that is already normal of them."

For the first time, apart from his usual authoritarian gaze, Mr. Pinky let a different expression show in him, and it was as if he was surprised by what those four children were telling him.

"Well, so..." said the teacher, shrugging, "did you bring your camera for the extra class activities?"

"Of course, here it's," Rocky replied as he headed to his desk and returned with a camera in his hands. "It does serve us, right?"

"It'll give you better results in the work you will have to do," the teacher replied. "This camera belongs to your parents, right?"

"Of course," Jemky replied with a forced smile and looking sideways at the group. "And what are we going to do with that, by the way?"

"You'll have to take pictures of different species of plants and insects, and then you have to point out their details, *all well explained and with drawings.*"

"Hey, that's too much," Jemky said in disgust.

"Or else, you're not saved from this cycle!" replied the teacher, leaving them still with his tone of voice.

Suddenly, Diddy and Dixie also appeared at the desk to submit their class exercises.

"Okay, Mr. Diddy and Miss Dixie," said the teacher. "You can leave. And don't forget next week to bring your pyramids so you can pass the cycle. You too, Messrs. Jemky and company, submit your exercises right now and leave. And you know, come back in an hour here for your extra classes, and if you can, take your pictures in advance."

The time to leave had finally arrived, and classes were practically over as such. Everyone left the classroom happy, almost feeling the vacation.

"The other week we'll just have to come to the submitting of those pyramids and that's all," Diddy said as he walked with Dixie outside the classroom. "And finally, it'll be vacation."

"Yeah... And we can go on that trip later," Dixie added, smiling a little.

"I just hope everything--"

"Oh, the girlfriend and boyfriend are leaving together!" Mandrew and Melenky exclaimed, appearing by surprise.

"Do you want to shut up?!" Diddy replied, annoyed. "Stop bothering us!"

"You two are a couple! They are a couple!" Both children exclaimed, pushing them. "You like Dixie!"

"No! Stop talking nonsense!" Diddy exclaimed, losing his patience. "That stupid assumption of yours will never happen!"

Instantly, the bully children murmured again in an uproar tone, while Dixie gave some look of disgust towards Diddy in a sneaky way.

"Come on, monkey," Mandrew said, pushing Diddy. "Don't pretend it anymore, you do--"

"Agh, shut up at once!" replied Diddy, beginning to accelerate the pace along with Dixie to get away from them, while they continued to laugh mockingly. It was too awkward for Diddy that someone mentioned such a thing in front of Dixie.

Diddy and Dixie headed to a corner further away from those children, who were reunited in their group of four. When they could finally be calm, they stopped before saying goodbye.

"Fools," Diddy said, looking into the distance at the quartet, and then looked back at Dixie trying to act normal. "Ignore them, you know it's not true what those fools say, they talk antics. You and I are just friends, aren't we?"

"Yes... Of course," Dixie replied with a short-forced smile.

"Well, so, I'll see you this afternoon, Dixie," Diddy said, smiling and reminding her that he had invited her. "I'll wait for you near the waterfalls in the middle of the afternoon."

"Okay," Dixie replied, although with a certain coldness.

"Uh? Is something going on?" Diddy asked with a strange smile when he noticed her change.

"No... nothing," she added, hiding her frustration at Diddy's answers. "Uhh, hey, Diddy, I think... I don't want to go out this afternoon."

"What? Hey, but..." Diddy said, looking a little disappointed, "we agreed to go today."

"No, no, it's that... I just don't feel like hanging out today," she reaffirmed, looking at him with a hidden frustration. "Or we can go another day."

"H-hey, no, what do you say? Today I wanted to... show you something important. Could you go today, right?"

"Well, not now..." Dixie replied, still hesitant, but then trying to smile at him. "Or well... Okay, better yes. Let's go today."

"Okay, then see you later, Dixie," Diddy finished, smiling at her.

Diddy said goodbye and left on his way home. Meanwhile, Dixie stared at him as he walked away. She was a little disappointed; Diddy's comments about if the two of them would date, made her frustrated and she was unable to help it. In fact, whenever someone mentioned that matter to them... he denied it as if it were not a good thing. She came to think that maybe Diddy didn't love her the way she did or he wouldn't be interested in taking the first step.

"That dwarf monkey still doesn't tell you a *little love secret*?" said Jemky, appearing behind with a few small laughs, before approaching Dixie. "That monkey doesn't love you; he's a coward and doesn't look interested in you, don't you think?"

Dixie turned to look at him in disgust at the comment, and then looked back at Diddy walking away into the distance, still with a frustrated expression. After sighing disappointed, she started walking to leave too, when suddenly, Jemky stopped her.

"Hey, Dixie," he called her. "By the way... I wanted to talk to you about something."

"And now what do you want?" Dixie exclaimed reluctantly, as Jemky began to smile at her.

"Well, you'll see..."

Diddy was home in the mid-afternoon hours. He was sitting on the couch assembling what appeared to be a very small box, almost the size of the palm of his hand, with a red ribbon on top and on which he had placed a note inside.

"Diddy, I'll go with Candy to- Huh? What are you doing?" asked Donkey, seeing him with that little box.

Diddy turned to look at Donkey with a broad smile, before answering him.

"I'll tell Dixie," he replied without further ado, this time, being determined.

"Wait!" Donkey asked with a raised look, to which Diddy nodded all smiling. "Wow, little buddy! Now you've decided?"

"Well, yes... or so I think," Diddy replied, blushing a little.

"That's my little buddy!" he said, patting him on the back. "Will you go right now?"

"Of course," Diddy replied, getting up and heading for the door. "I told her we'll meet this afternoon."

"But you won't be nervous again, will you?" Donkey said, hands at his sides.

"Of course not, Donkey," Diddy said with a few small laughs. "Or at least I want to believe that."

"Okay, then, good luck, buddy!" Donkey exclaimed, smiling. "I know you can do it."

"I hope so," Diddy replied with a small laugh, although deep down, he was already getting nervous. "See you later, Donkey."

Diddy left his house. The reason he had asked Dixie to hang out that afternoon was because he had finally made up his mind about saying his feelings about her; after all, it was the only way to know if he would have any chance. Although anyway, just imagining what it would be like made him very nervous. He knew it was time to do it if he wanted to know if Dixie would reciprocate, even if it put their friendship at risk... and even if he spent trying to hide his feelings at all costs.

After a long journey, Diddy arrived at the place where he had said to meet Dixie. He was in the middle of the jungle a few meters from a lake; there he was... waiting for Dixie, and waiting for that moment. Diddy did not stop feeling that enormous tension, because in a few minutes later, he would have to know how Dixie would react and, above all, if he would be able to tell her this time without being attacked by nerves. He looked at the small box he had made and only thought of Dixie receiving it.

Suddenly, he saw a silhouette in the distance of someone approaching... Indeed, *it was Dixie*... As soon as Diddy recognized her, his heartbeat accelerated to a thousand. In recent times, he no longer felt nervous about being with Dixie, but when it came to trying to reveal his feelings to her, those emotions revived.

"*You can, Diddy*" he said to himself in mind "*Just do it, you can.*"

"Hi, Diddy!" said Dixie when she arrived.

Diddy froze the instant she spoke to him; his time had come and now he would have to tell her no matter what.

"H-hi... Dixie," he replied smiling, trying to hide his nerves as much as he could. "Uh, are you ready to go?"

"Uhh, Diddy, you'll see..." Dixie said, smiling in an apparent forced way and looking sideways, "I have to tell you something very important right now."

"Really?" suddenly, Diddy began to fill with various thoughts, which made the nerves attack him more intensely, but he struggled to hide it. "Do you know?... I was going to tell you something important too, Dixie."

"Oh, really?... What a coincidence," Dixie replied with a small smile. "Tell me you first."

Now there was no turning back for Diddy; he had to do it no matter what and without hesitating again.

"Uh, so... I... Well... you..." he began to try, but he still couldn't; again, his nerves were attacking him and his mind was blocked. "Or not, say what you have to tell me first, Dixie," he added with a forced smile.

"Okay... You see, maybe this sounds crazy to you, but..." Dixie took a few seconds of silence and took a strong breath before continuing. "I'm going to... start hanging out with Jemky."

"*What? W-what did she say?*" Diddy thought instantly.

Diddy was paralyzed by such a sudden response. He wanted to make sure he had heard Dixie right.

"W-what?!" was the first thing Diddy expressed. "Say... what?... You with... that orangutan?... Hanging out on a plan to..."

"Yes..." Dixie replied, showing some shyness. "We're going to hang out on a plan to... you know, *dating*," she said, smiling subtly.

"What?!"

"Uh, yes, and in fact, I think you'll have to excuse me, but... we have our first date this afternoon too," Dixie added with a forced smile. "I'm sorry, Diddy, but I won't be able to go with you today."

"Hey, wait, wait, but what are you saying?! I mean... We were going to go this afternoon."

"Ahh, yeah, but I won't be able to today, Diddy," Dixie replied with the same expression.

Suddenly, Diddy felt a strong knot that started in his stomach and reached his heart; that physical sensation it feels when someone finds out about something it was better off without knowing.

"Hey, O-one moment!" Diddy exclaimed, who still hadn't fully processed what Dixie was telling him. "First, you had told me that we could go to the waterfalls this afternoon."

"Well, yes, but... I forgot that I also had that date with Jemky today, since he had to stay in the extra classes," Dixie said, smiling hard. "Sorry, I don't think I can today, Diddy."

"And second, with Jemky?" interrupted Diddy as he assimilated it. "I mean... Not that I give it importance, but... *it's Jemky*, h-he's one of those hateful fools. Besides, you always said that he was a fool, daring and ugly orangutan."

"Uhh, well, it's that... this week we've been talking after school and... he's not as bad as we thought," Dixie replied, smiling and looking sideways. "And in fact... I think I already started to like him."

Diddy was all confused; he didn't know what to do or how to react to what Dixie was telling him.

"H-hey, don't take it badly, Dixie, but... don't you remember how braggart he is?" said Diddy, looking at her strangely. "So, how long have you been dating? I didn't know that... Or is it a joke?" he added, crossing his arms and staring at her.

"No, it's true, Diddy. Four days ago, we started talking more," Dixie reaffirmed with a smile. "And I hadn't told you because... I didn't know what face you were going to make, because you know, we've never gotten along with that group. And he's not so bad now that I've talked to him more, you just have to get to know him better," she explained, still smiling. "Now tell me what you were going to tell me, Diddy."

Suddenly, and for the bad luck of Diddy, who wished it was a joke in very bad taste... Jemky appeared and stopped right next to Dixie.

"Hi, my beautiful Dixie," said the orangutan boy before hugging her.

"Jemky!" exclaimed Dixie, smiling and apparently reciprocating the hug. "Will we go for a walk as you promised?"

"Of course, pretty, wherever you want. And we'll take a lot of pictures of the two of us," he replied in his sweetest tone, even carrying the same camera they had taken to school. "Oh, hi, monkey," he said to Diddy, waving at him. "How so around here?"

"Uh, it's that... I hadn't told Diddy about our date," Dixie told Jemky. "But now he knows."

Diddy only stared at them with a paralyzed expression; he felt strong urges to give Jemky his comeuppance and tell him not to bother Dixie... But no, this time... Dixie reciprocated him as if nothing?! Had she agreed to date the orangutan boy? Diddy, who a few minutes ago was one step away from telling Dixie how he feels, now had just learned something that took away all the momentum. Then, he observed for himself the small box he had made.

"Hey, didn't you have something to say to me, Diddy?" Dixie asked him later.

Diddy knew that it would be useless to confess his feelings to her; he just wanted to get out of there to better process what was happening.

"N-nothing, forget it!" Diddy replied, looking at her with utter indifference. "Hope your date goes well."

Without further thought, Diddy turned around and immediately left; he didn't want to know anything else for the time being.

"H-hey, Diddy, wait, wait!... Diddy!" Dixie tried to call Diddy, but he had already quickened his pace.

"Oh, leave him, pretty," Jemky said, taking her arm. "It's getting late for our *date*."

"But it's that-"

"And well..." he said, staring at her in a steady, serious way as he held her arm. "*What object* did I tell you to hand me over right now?"

In the evening, Donkey was back home after dating Candy earlier that afternoon. He climbed the stairs and entered, all glad to have hung out with his girlfriend once again.

"I've arrived, little buddy!" he said cheerfully as he closed the door. "Hey, right, Funky told me to go to the beach tonight. Don't you want to come?... Diddy?"

Donkey stood still for a few seconds when he saw his nephew: he was lying on the hanging tire, his eyes lowered and a smile all absent... very contrary to how Donkey expected to find him after he told him what he would do that afternoon.

"Hi, Donkey," Diddy uttered in a weak voice and barely looking at him.

In that state he was in, Donkey guessed what could have happened. He walked to where Diddy was to talk to him better.

"Uhh... Something... went wrong?" Donkey asked insecurely.

"Worse," Diddy replied, beginning to look up.

"Oh, no... What happened, little buddy?" Donkey asked, looking at him with concern.

Diddy looked down again, while hesitant to answer.

"Dixie told me that... she was dating... Jemky."

"W-what?!" Donkey exclaimed, confused and wanting to be sure of what he heard. "Hey, wait, wait... Did you say... *Jemky*?... That orangutan boy from your former group of friends who was chasing her?"

"Same."

"And... so you didn't tell Dixie?"

"No, now for what," Diddy replied, both sad and angry. "The worst thing is that when we gathered, she told me she couldn't go with me because she was hanging out with him."

"But what?! How did that happen?" Donkey also had difficulty assimilating what Diddy just said, and it even sounded so strange and sudden to him. "A-Are you sure that's true, little buddy?"

"She told me herself!" Diddy exclaimed in an anguished tone. "Then Jemky arrived to go to the date, the two of them hugged, and then I just told them to do well and left, I couldn't stay any longer."

"What?!" Donkey said with a look of weirdness. "But how with that boy? Are you really saying it, buddy?"

"Yes! I saw and heard it myself," Diddy replied with a look of frustration. "I didn't want to believe it either, but I saw it."

Donkey was now shocked; he could not believe that either and it was very strange what Diddy was telling him. Then, he started pacing back and forth as he tried to understand the situation and process everything.

"But I don't understand, I mean... you are her best friend, with whom she has spent the most time and with whom she has shared the most... Even not only me, some of us were convinced that she

might feel the same way you did. How instead of choosing a good and charismatic monkey like you, she chose that orangutan boy-"

Donkey stopped when he saw Diddy turn his back... And he could see him wiping his eyes with one hand.

"Oh, no, no, little buddy," Donkey said with pity, returning to him. "Are you..."

"Donkey... I loved her," Diddy said, shedding tears. "But it's too late as you told me," he added before breaking down in tears.

Donkey was very sad to see how his nephew, for the first time in his life, was heartbroken. He couldn't do anything else, so he just hugged him to comfort him a little.

"Calm down, calm down, little buddy, those things usually happen and hurt a lot, I know... but not forever."

Diddy didn't answer anymore; he just let his tears fall into Donkey's arms, which made him feel sorrier.

"Oh, Diddy," Donkey said sadly, before letting go. "Hey, come, let's talk here."

Diddy, though reluctant at first, got off his tire and accompanied Donkey to sit on the couch. Diddy still had live tears in his eyes.

"Now what am I supposed to do, Donkey?" he said as he wiped away his tears.

"Well... If she is with that boy, you should let her be happy with him if she wants to... Although you have never wanted to tell me well how those children are, what is that Jemky like?" he asked, frowning.

Diddy, to date, had not told him what those children were really like. Although they four were no longer as annoying or threatening compared to several months ago, Diddy still lived with the insecurity of telling it, and had only told Donkey that he was no longer friends with them because they simply took distance. However, Diddy also didn't want to get overwhelmed any more at the time or have an argument with Donkey regarding that topic, so he tried to be concrete to answer.

"Well... the truth is that he's very braggart in that way," Diddy replied. "I just hope he won't treat her badly afterwards. And they two barely started dating this week, Dixie told me."

"Since this week? But what's wrong with Dixie?" exclaimed Donkey, looking too confused. He paused before continuing. "Hey, I don't really believe that that's true, little buddy, it's very weird... Are you sure that's true?"

"But she told me herself, Donkey," Diddy added as he continued to shed tears. "Even when we left school, she had told me first that she didn't want to hang out with me today... and now I understand why. And I can't do anything anymore."

Donkey, although looking at the situation with some oddity, was also sorry to see Diddy expressing himself in that way, so he wanted to try to cheer him up as best he could.

"Uhh, but look at a good thing, little buddy: at least you and Dixie are best friends, you still have that friendship... I know it's not the same, but at least you'll still be there for her when she needs it.

Besides, I don't think she's going to last long with someone like that orangutan boy. As I've told you before, I always have had a bad feeling about those kids. I even find it very strange that Dixie dates with one of them, maybe she leaves him later."

Diddy lowered his gaze as if there was nothing to cheer him up again. Donkey, feeling bad and pitied, placed a hand on his head.

"Okay, little buddy, you can cry and vent whatever you want for the moment, since it must hurt a lot... But you should not let this situation end the happy and funny monkey you have always been; you still have you, you have me, you have our other friends. This *isn't* the end of the world, is it? You'll see that later you'll get better... But of course, if you want, for now just vent all you need."

"Okay, Donkey..."

"I love you, my little buddy," Donkey said, before hugging him like a father to his son.

"And I to you, Donkey," Diddy replied again smiling a little while still had tears in his eyes.

"Come, we'll make a delicious dinner to make you feel better, okay?"

Donkey took his nephew to the kitchen where they prepared a banana dessert, all to make him feel better after the love disappointment he had just had; with that, Diddy regained some spirits. And, as Donkey had mentioned upon arrival, they later went to Funky's house as well where they hung out near the beach.

But between moments, Diddy was again invaded by those bad emotions: Dixie, who was his best friend and for whom he felt something more than a friendship for a long time, had apparently agreed to date one of his archenemies from school, and could not even tell her what he felt, making him understand that he could no longer have a chance with her. He thought maybe that's what Donkey meant by it might be too late... All the illusions he had created with Dixie, collapsed that day. He hated Jemky more than ever, but if Dixie wanted him, he didn't want to interfere in her decision either... Although he didn't like the idea of her being with him either, it seemed very strange to him and it overwhelmed him to think about it. He wanted to get the idea that it wasn't true, but he couldn't, not if Dixie herself had claimed it.

Chapter 18: Inexplicable

The next day, in the evening, all the kongs had gathered again. As mentioned before, the Kong family liked to meet somewhere in the jungle to hang out. This time, they were gathered outside the house of Dixie, Tiny, Kiddy, and Chunky. Everyone was present, except for Cranky and Wrinkly, who were on a cruise vacation.

Donkey and Diddy were walking to the house of the four kongs, although truth be told, Diddy wasn't in the mood to see Dixie again, at least not yet. When they finally arrived, everyone greeted them.

"Hi, dudes!" Funky exclaimed to the two, and they waved back.

"Hi! How are you doing?" Donkey greeted them.

"Hey, Diddy, we're going to play this new game, do you want to come?" suggested Tiny with a set of cards in hand along with Kiddy and Chunky.

"Oh, great, let's go," Diddy replied smiling.

"It's very entertaining, you'll see," Tiny said with emotion.

"Hey, where's Dixie?" Chunky asked.

"I don't know, she was here with us just now," Tiny replied before shrugging. "She'll be back."

Diddy went to join the three young kongs to play cards, while the older kongs gathered in another corner.

For some reason, Dixie was not present at first, until later, she appeared. She left her house and greeted everyone else and, after that, she also joined the group of the younger kongs. Diddy, for his part, tried to avoid making eye contact with her; just seeing her he remembered again the bad moment he went through, he didn't even greet her with joy as he always did, he did it rather barely smiling a little to her.

"Come, Dixie, we're with the new game," Tiny said.

"Okay," Dixie replied.

The five young kongs started playing within their group. Everyone seemed to be having fun... even though Diddy didn't look as cheerful as he always did at a time like this, he didn't even joke Dixie anymore like he used to whenever they played... While she seemed to look at him with some seriousness.

Later, the older kongs also joined them and started playing the ten of them. In the middle of the games, some won, others lost, others got frustrated and cheated, but they never lacked laughter.

"In this round I'll beat you all!" Lanky exclaimed as he placed a card in the center.

"You think so, but Chunky will be a winner here," Chunky replied when it was his turn.

"Well, you'll all see!" Donkey exclaimed in the same way.

The kongs present had a good time in the round of cards they were playing, where without a doubt, everyone had fun in the middle of the competition.

"Hey, Dixie," Funky spoke quietly after a while, who was next to her. "Is it true that you have a boyfriend at school?"

Instantly, Dixie opened her eyes to the fullest at that question. Those who were close to her, looked at her shocked and confused as well.

"W-what?!" she said stammering.

"*What?!'*" said her sister and cousins looking at her with amazement and strangeness.

"Hey, it's not true about Jem- Uhh, no, no, I mean-" she stammered before being interrupted.

"What are you saying, little cousin? Do you already have a boyfriend?" asked Chunky, shocked. He spoke louder that caught the attention of the rest. "Wait! *Were you going to say...* Don't tell me it's that ugly orangutan with annatto hair that chases you!" he added, frowning sternly.

"No! I meant..."

Dixie was silent for a few seconds, as if Mr. Pinky had asked her a question in class; she had all the expression of not knowing what to say... She even looked at Diddy sideways.

"Uhh, no... Well, not exactly," Dixie replied... with a noticeable forced smile. "I-I mean, it's not that with that boy, I mean, not exactly that... and..."

The other kongs looked at her as if she was saying inconsistencies, because that sounded so strange and surprising to everyone.

"Are you serious, Dixie?" Tiny asked, looking at her strangely. "Really-"

"Uhh, no, no, no! I must go, I must go!" interrupted Dixie, before getting up and heading immediately inside her house. Instantly, she closed the door and didn't come out anymore.

There was a moment of silence, as everyone was still confused and trying to understand what they had heard.

"Orangutans aren't annatto hair, huh?" pointed Lanky.

"What's wrong with Dixie?" Chunky asked, looking confused.

"Diddy!" Tiny whispered. "You who go with Dixie to school... Is that true?"

"Well... Yes, it's true," Diddy confirmed, hiding his sadness as he remembered it again. "She said it herself."

All the kongs present made a gesture of astonishment and were stunned at that supposed novelty.

"Say what?!" Chunky exclaimed, showing himself all shocked, like the rest of the kongs.

"What are you saying, Diddy?!" Tiny exclaimed in the same way. "Is that true?"

"Well, yes... didn't you know?" Diddy asked them.

"No, not at all, we didn't even think about it," Chunky replied with a look of weirdness.

"Hey, that must not be true," replied Tiny. "It has to be a joke!"

Like the others, Tiny and Chunky didn't seem to believe it, nor could they assimilate that Dixie, who had long been crushed on Diddy, had ended up with another kong boy. Even so... they could see that something was not right.

"No, no, no!" Chunky exclaimed, putting his hands to his temple. "Dixie wouldn't be with a boy like that, I mean... she hasn't even told us so much about him! She hasn't told us."

"Let's see, that's very weird! She never told us anything," Tiny added, frowning and placing her hands at her sides. "Even... she said she *didn't* like that boy at all, and-"

"How come Dixie already has a boyfriend?" Candy asked, looking confused too. "Wasn't she..." she added, looking sideways at Diddy, but she couldn't give anything away in the presence of Tiny, Kiddy, and Chunky.

"Hey, but how did it turn out to be true?" Funky said. "I mean... that couldn't be true," he added, also looking sideways at Diddy.

"Well, my sister will have to explain a lot of things to us," Tiny said, still frowning. "She never told us that."

"That's true," Chunky added in the same way. "Chunky doesn't yet believe that's true."

The kongs continued to play games and also mutter about what had just been revealed, except for Dixie, who had not left her house. In fact... she looked very embarrassed when she left. What was really wrong with her?

A while later, the kongs served themselves some banana milkshakes. Then, the older kongs and, on the other hand, the younger ones met again. In this last group, Diddy was meeting with his three friends as usual and playing cards, but this time, he hardly spoke, rather he was all quiet and serious, so much so that the other three seemed to notice it.

"Is something wrong, Diddy?" Chunky asked, looking worried to see him like this.

"No... it's nothing," Diddy replied, barely smiling a little. "Why do you say so?"

"You look very quiet today," Chunky told him.

"Huh, me?" he asked, trying to disguise. "No, what are you talking about?"

"Oh, come on, we're your friends, we know something is up," Tiny added in the same way as Chunky.

"No, seriously, it's just... bad school day yesterday," Diddy lied, even though the three of them weren't convinced of that answer. "Yes, it is that... I went wrong in a question that the new teacher asked me in class and he scolded me, that's all."

"Wow, that grumpy teacher Dixie tells us about too," Chunky said.

"Hey, and right, how come Dixie already has a boyfriend?" asked Tiny folded arms curiously. "She hasn't told us."

The explanation that Diddy did not want to give, he had to give anyway, although he was not in the mood to tell it in detail.

"Yes, that orangutan boy," Diddy replied seriously and without looking up. "Yesterday they hung out, in fact."

"*Yesterday?*" Tiny and Chunky asked in unison. "But she told us she had gone with you to the waterfalls," Tiny added, crossing her arms.

"What? We didn't go anywhere; she said she would go out with him," Diddy replied, looking at them strangely. "So really... didn't she tell you anything?"

"No, she told us she had gone out with you," Chunky reaffirmed. "She never named us that other ugly boy."

"But what are you saying?" Diddy asked again with greater confusion. "T-that is... she told me herself and I saw her with him live, seriously."

Diddy was now all confused, in fact, the four of them were confused... The versions didn't seem to fit well.

"We'll have to ask Dixie everything well," Chunky concluded, scratching his head.

"Or maybe really... is she with that orangutan kid?" Tiny wondered.

"Chunky doesn't think so," Chunky said earnestly. "She has told us until the end that that boy was a braggart and that she would never give him a chance."

As they continued their game, Diddy now didn't know what to think. While he was disappointed, he didn't understand the context that the conversation with his friends took, even beginning to find Dixie's reaction strange the moment she entered his house.

Minutes later, Diddy retired from the game and went for a walk near the area. He wasn't in the mood to have fun with the others; he needed a space for himself and to reflect a little. Then, he went to sit on the floor on the sides of his four friends' house, just to spend some time thinking.

"Uhh... Diddy," a female voice called him, which Diddy soon recognized. "Are you... mad at me?"

Diddy turned to look and, to his surprise, it was none other than Dixie. As soon as he looked at her, he couldn't help but remember the bad time he had gone through, although he tried to hide his disappointment.

"Uhh, no, why should I be?" asked Diddy, trying to look confused.

"You know, because I went out with Jemky when I told you we were going to the waterfalls," Dixie replied in a low tone.

Diddy just looked at her and fell silent with hardly any answer to her, so he just looked away a little.

"I know you, so you are," Dixie told him, before sitting down next to him. "Sorry, it's that... Well, that was an unforeseen event."

Diddy kept quiet. He wasn't so mad at Dixie for standing him up, but he didn't know what to say to her now, and he didn't even want to talk so much about it.

"But... I was thinking if tomorrow we could go to the waterfalls, I promise you," Dixie added with a small smile. "Of course... if you want."

Diddy, still with the disappointment latent in him, tried to answer her.

"Dixie, it's just..." he said, trying to be a little honest. "You didn't tell me before that you would go with Jemky, when we had agreed to go to the waterfalls... Or is that why you had told me you didn't want to go?"

"Uhh... Well, Y-Yes... Yes, that's why," Dixie replied with an apparent forced smile. "It's that I... Uh, well, I didn't know how to tell you that and... I didn't know how you were going to take that idea. But yes, if you want, we can go to the waterfalls tomorrow."

"Okay..." Diddy replied after a while, smiling a little. "But we are really going this time, right?"

"Yes, of course. We will not leave it pending, we will go tomorrow. How about going at sunset?"

"Well, if you want," Diddy replied with a shrug. "So... let's go tomorrow?"

"Yes, all right," Dixie smiled back. But suddenly, she began to look somewhat embarrassed. "By the way, don't tell my sister and cousins that the matter about Jemky is true!"

Diddy didn't know what to say again because he had already told them about it, to which Dixie soon recognized his expression.

"Oh, no, *you told them*," she said in frustration.

"Oh, I'm sorry, but I thought they already knew," Diddy apologized immediately. "Wait... but if you say you're dating Jemky, why do you want to hide it?" he asked, confused.

"No, it's that we're not dating, it wasn't true, I-I mean... that wasn't true," Dixie explained, leaving Diddy more confused.

"What?" Diddy asked, all confused. "But... yesterday you said that and that you were going to go out with him."

"Well, it's that... Ah, yes, I left him," Dixie replied in an apparent forced tone and looking sideways. "H-he was a complete braggart; it was not going to be worth it if I formalized something with him."

Diddy got a strange expression with what Dixie was talking about and the way she said it... That only confused him more and more.

"Well?... Good thing," Diddy replied with a confused smile, before being really serious. "Uh, I mean, it's not for nothing, Dixie, but really those kids are not a good choice... Maybe he would

invite you to steal jewelry, take those strange lollipops, and do evil to others."

"Oh, no, of course I wouldn't do those things," Dixie added, shaking her head. "That's why I also gave up going with him. So no, I'm not dating him, it wasn't true."

"Well... if you say so," Diddy replied smiling, but looking at Dixie with some strangeness, as if something made him doubt. "Or maybe... has that fool Jemky said something bad to you?"

"What? No, what are you saying?" Dixie replied with the same strangeness. "Well... He behaved well with me, only between times he went out with his bluster, and that's why I left him."

"And... how did you two start hanging out, by the way?" Diddy asked, still looking at her doubtfully. "You never told me that."

"Well," Dixie said, averting her gaze several times. "Oh, yes, from the day I told you, when he told me about their dads and I wrote him those pyramid instructions, that's when we started talking and... yes, it was from that day that we agreed to date and I thought about... give him a chance to see how he would be... But I already left him," she finished with an apparent fake smile.

"Uhh, okay... I guess it was the best thing you did," Diddy replied with a forced smile and strangeness at the same time. "I mean, that fool wouldn't be worth it. And by the way... what did you two do yesterday? Did you take pictures of yourselves at the waterfalls as he said?"

"No, of course not. Nothing really happened with him. Well..." Dixie replied, looking everywhere sideways. "Oh, yes, we just went there for a while and started talking, but you know, he started to behave like a snooty braggart, and there I left him... Even, the date didn't last that long; I left soon after."

"Oh, just as well... I mean, that explains things better," Diddy said with a slight smile.

"Well, I don't think we should talk about him anymore; that came to nothing," Dixie added, still with a forced smile. "By the way, Diddy, didn't you have yesterday... anything to tell me before you left?"

Diddy felt a little acceleration in his heartbeat when Dixie reminded him of that... But he could no longer tell him how he felt; he knew it was in vain, for all the courage he had to confess his feelings to her had completely disappeared.

"Uhh, I think I've forgotten," he replied, shrugging and trying to sound normal. "It wasn't important, anyway."

"Really... you're not going to tell me anything?" Dixie asked again, crossing her arms.

"It wasn't anything important, really. That is... I think it was just a school thing; it doesn't matter anymore," Diddy finished with a forced smile.

Dixie looked like she wasn't convinced by that answer, although she didn't press him any further. There was another long silence between the two; although they were friends, Diddy felt that things were no longer the same, at least for him... And telling her how he felt could already ruin the friendship, much more so now that he assumed she would have no feelings for him.

"Oh, and hey, Diddy... how is your pyramid going?" Dixie asked him after a while. "Have you finished its details yet?"

"Yes, this afternoon I was able to finish it. And yours?"

"I just recently finished it too. And let's see if that teacher is okay with it."

"I hope it's not going to get heavy," Diddy replied with a small smile.

Diddy and Dixie continued to talk as normal, but remained in the same place, as Dixie didn't want to see anyone after the awkward exposure about her and Jemky. Diddy, on the other hand, felt a little better talking to Dixie, even though he saw her as unreachable now and no longer the same with her. He knew he would just have to try to accept it... Although that could cost him too much, and even if he had waited so long for her.

The next day, in the evening hours, Diddy was preparing again to go out with Dixie as she had told him the night before. Although this time... he was not as lively as before. While he was at ease with his friendship with Dixie, deep down... he would have wanted to go one step further with her and have more than just a friendship. But with what happened, he thought that perhaps it was in vain to continue waiting for that, and he even began to doubt whether he could continue to maintain friendship with her normally.

"Are you going to hang out with Dixie today?" Donkey asked Diddy as he walked out the door.

"Yes, she had told me to go to the waterfalls today."

"After standing you up two days ago?" Donkey asked, arms crossed.

"She told me we could go today," he replied with a shrug. "And of course, this time it will be a normal hanging out as always."

"Well?" Donkey replied with a look of strangeness. "And... won't you say anything to her anymore, will you?"

"No, now for what, it's in vain," Diddy said with a shrugged and lowered gaze. "Better to leave things there; it will be the best after all."

Donkey continued to look with the same expression at Diddy as he watched him leave the house.

Diddy left and went to the same place where he had gathered with Dixie two days ago, the same place where she had given him that unexpected and inexplicable news.

This time, Diddy was no longer as nervous as last time. He was convinced that he would go out with Dixie as friends, like they had hung out normally on several previous occasions. Obviously, he also had nothing planned to say or what to do with Dixie. It was as if he would only accompany her so as not to leave the plan pending, and he was not so excited either.

Diddy was a few meters away from the place to meet Dixie. This time, she had already arrived first and was present at the place, but suddenly... Diddy was confused by what he saw, and paused for a while... Just like last time: Dixie was present at the site, but not alone, she was... again *with Jemky*

accompanying her? Diddy observed that panorama from a distance without knowing what to do or what to think, since even... Both seemed to go together arm in arm. The two were walking ahead, so Diddy quickly headed over to talk to them.

"Uhh, D-Dixie?" Diddy called her quite surprised.

Instantly, Dixie along with Jemky turned to see him.

"Oh, hi, dwarf," Jemky said as they saw him arrive.

"Uh, h-hi, Diddy," Dixie said with an apparent nervous smile.

"*But...* And now what?" exclaimed Diddy, quite confused.

"Ahh, right, Diddy, I-I hadn't told you again, but..." Dixie whispered looking sideways at Jemky, "today... I will go out with Jemky just now again."

"What?" Diddy said, all confused. "Hey, but weren't we going today?"

"Were you going to go out with that monkey today?" Jemky asked Dixie seriously.

"No, no, no!" replied Dixie hurriedly, looking sideways at Diddy. "I-I mean, of course not... Uh, look, Diddy, it's that *right now*... Jemky and I have another date. By the way... Yes, we are dating," she added with a short smile. "Right, Jemky?"

"Of course, my dear Dixie," Jemky replied in a sweet tone.

"Hey, wasn't that a lie, Dixie?!" Diddy exclaimed, still confused. "So, how is this?"

"Wait a minute, did you lie about us, Dixie?" Jemky asked again.

"No, no, I haven't denied it, Jemky!" Dixie hurriedly replied. "I don't know what Diddy is talking about, if you and I were going to have a date."

"Say what?!" Diddy exclaimed, shocked at what Dixie was saying. "Hey, wait, wait, Dixie... Yesterday you told me that today we could go to the waterfalls."

"What?! I didn't tell you that, Diddy," Dixie replied earnestly... and with an apparent indifference never seen before. "Now if you will allow us, Jemky and I have a date to keep."

Diddy was confused; he didn't understand what was happening to Dixie now... She had never responded to him that way.

"Oh, no, Dixie, are you going to do the same thing as last time?" Diddy said, crossing his arms. "So, why did you tell me we were going to go again if you're going to leave with that dumb orangutan?"

"Well, now I'm going to Jemky!" replied Dixie, raising her voice a little and looking sideways at Jemky. "And don't call him dumb... or you will be."

Diddy was instantly shocked at the last words Dixie said to him, and wondered if she was now behaving like Jemky and his group.

"Hey, what's wrong with you, Dixie?! You yourself had told me that we would go out there today," replied Diddy. "And what happens to you?... By being with Jemky are you going to act like him?"

"I'm *serious*," she replied, raising her tone of voice. "Oh, and do you know something else?... I don't want to be your friend anymore," she added with an indifference she'd never used before.

Diddy was much more shocked: that wasn't Dixie, not the one he knew and he didn't know what was happening to her.

"But what's really wrong with you, Dixie?!" Diddy exclaimed in a loud voice. "What do you mean we won't be friends anymore?!"

"Well, that: *I won't be your friend!*" replied Dixie, raising her tone much more. "From now on I will spend all my time with Jemky; I don't need you anymore! Now, you can leave and leave us alone on our date."

"Dixie!" Diddy exclaimed in shock.

Those last words were enough to confuse Diddy much more; he didn't know why Dixie was talking to him that way.

"Yes, you dumb monkey," Jemky added, looking at him mockingly. "You heard her, we have an important date, so go to your little house."

"Wait a minute! One minute!" Diddy interrupted firmly. "This has to be a joke, Dixie! You are not like that! Or is something this idiot telling you?!" he pointed to Jemky.

"What are you talking about?!" Jemky replied. "I haven't done anything, monkey! I was just going to hang out with Dixie!"

"It's serious, Diddy!" replied Dixie. "I'll go with Jemky! Now, I would appreciate that you *left* here!"

"But what are you saying, Dixie?!" replied Diddy much more shocked, before wanting to pounce on Jemky. "*Or what are you telling her, dumb orangut-*"

"*Hey, no, no, Diddy!*" Dixie replied, interjecting defensively towards Jemky. "Please leave us now on our date, so leave right now!"

"Yes, monkey, I'm sorry," Jemky added likewise. "But Dixie and I have something pending."

"Yes, Diddy, *leave us alone right now*," Dixie added in all seriousness. "And don't interrupt us, please."

Immediately, the two turned around and started walking to just leave. Diddy didn't even stop to follow them anymore; he was being consumed by a strong indignation and bursting inside: Dixie stood him up again. And, as if that were not enough, he was completely indignant at Dixie's attitude and words.

"*Ugh, okay, Dixie!*" Diddy replied from a distance. "Anyway, I didn't even want to go with you today!"

Without arguing any more, Diddy turned around and began to walk leaving from the area, taking accelerated steps of anger and indignation... and with much more reason now.

Meanwhile, Dixie and Jemky also went away from the site at accelerated steps and while he was holding Dixie's arm.

"He's already gone," Jemky whispered, looking at Diddy in the distance, before speaking to Dixie. "What a good performance, baby. That monkey was saved," he said, smiling, but then looking at her seriously. "But now: hand us over what was *pending*..."

Chapter 19: Troubled Final Day

It had been another bad day for Diddy. He was in his room all discouraged when he should be happy that classes were over, which by the way, the next day was the submit of the final schoolworks, but he didn't even want to think about that.

He took a look at his pyramid, which was already finished. But especially, he noticed the emerald that was at the top... the same one Dixie had given him a week earlier; as soon as he saw it, he felt a huge urge to cry in disappointment; he was still trying to process Dixie's attitude toward him that day. He could tolerate that she didn't choose him to be more than friends, but he never thought that she would get to the point of trampling her friendship with him for another boy, of whom he didn't even know *when* she chose him.

Later, Diddy just went back to his bed and went to bed early... even if his thoughts didn't leave him alone. He wondered at every moment what was happening to Dixie; she would never have treated him like that, and even wanted to think she wasn't the Dixie he knew...

The next morning, it was finally the last day of school. Normally, Diddy was very enthusiastic on that day, but this time it was different; he didn't even feel that it was the last day of school. He didn't even feel happy because he would no longer see the group of his bully classmates for a long time.

Diddy continued to have a very bad face and a terrible mood while he was getting ready. He was all quiet, until...

"*DONKEY!*" he cried with great desperation.

"What's going on, little buddy?!" Donkey asked, arriving almost immediately at Diddy's room.

"The pyramid! Haven't you seen my pyramid?!" asked Diddy, moving quickly around the house and rummaging around every corner. "I can't find it! I left it in my room, I saw it right in front of me last night, *but it's gone!*"

"Hey, wait, wait, calm down!" Donkey exclaimed, stopping and holding Diddy. "Are you sure you left it there?"

"Yes! I've already searched the whole house, and it's not there!" exclaimed Diddy, panicking. "And that's the final exam or the *teacher will fail me!*"

"But it's a wooden pyramid; it can't have been easily lost," Donkey added, confused. "Let's see, I'll help you find it better."

For some mysterious reason, Diddy's pyramid had disappeared. He, with the help of Donkey, began to search every corner of the house, even outside and even in the cave where the banana reserve was... But they found nothing. It was quite a moment of panic for Diddy, because if he didn't take it to school, Mr. Pinky would fail him mercilessly and without excuses.

It was already getting late for Diddy and he had to go to Kong Kollege. Although he was very desperate, Donkey suggested that he just leave and talk to the teacher. Besides, a few days ago, the teacher had already seen the progress of his pyramid and he received positive comments from him, so he would have some hope that he would forgive him or, in another case, that he would give him more time to search for it later.

Diddy had no choice and headed to school without the pyramid, a little late. He would try to talk to Mr. Pinky to see if he would forgive him, although he doubted it very much, because that teacher had no sign of being understanding in such a situation.

He entered the classroom with all the fear towards the teacher. Indeed, he had arrived late and everyone was already inside and, as usual, everyone in the classroom looked at him as if he were someone famous entering the scene. Mr. Pinky, frowning too much, gave the order to Diddy with the look to move to his respective seat. Diddy's desk was always next to Dixie's, but this time, he didn't even want to look at her and just passed by; just remembering the event of the previous day made him indignant. Dixie, for her part, also maintained an expression of absolute seriousness... as if she didn't want to look at anyone either.

Then, there was a long period of silence as Mr. Pinky flipped through some books on his desk. Diddy was afraid of what the teacher would tell him if he didn't see his schoolwork in his hands; he just wished that the last day of school would end as soon as possible.

"Right!" exclaimed the teacher, rising from his seat after a few minutes. "Now, I'm going to review *your schoolworks!*"

Mr. Pinky went through his list and began to call the students one by one. Unfortunately, Diddy was the first... He just got up and gathered his strength to inform the teacher about the disappearance, even if nerves consumed him.

"Mr. Diddy! Your work!" the teacher ordered, while Diddy instantly adopted a fearful expression.

Diddy was starting to tremble as Mr. Pinky stared at him and asked for his pyramid.

"M-mister Pinky... I-I can explain it..." Diddy replied tremblingly. "I already h-had made the pyramid, last night it was right in my room... But this morning, it disappeared and I don't know where it is."

Diddy just hoped that those words would be enough, even though he couldn't think of a better excuse. Mr. Pinky continued to keep his stern gaze, and then watched him as if he had told him that his pet ate his homework.

"And do you think I'm going to believe that?!" he said aloud, earning a fearful look from Diddy.

"B-But, sir, last week you saw that I *have it done and-*"

"*You're failed!*" he exclaimed without further ado, before proceeding to write down in his notebook. "You will have to take make-up exams then, Mr. Diddy!"

"*Hey!*" Diddy exclaimed indignantly, but he could no longer explain to the teacher.

"Next! Mr. Melenky!"

Then, Melenky followed and proceeded to submit his pyramid, although truth be told, he and others of the bully group had only made a few dirt mountains all poorly made with barely a shiny jewel on the tops. Then followed Dixie, who was able to submit her pyramid normally and be approved. Successively, the other students continued, each with their work with particular details.

Diddy, leaning on his table and trying to restrain himself while rolling his eyes all the time, was all irritated above all by Mr. Pinky's attitude; the only thing left was to wait for what activity he would have to do after being failed... But suddenly, his face immediately changed to one of full shock when... the orangutan boy in the class submitted the pyramid to the teacher... And *that was Diddy's pyramid!* It could not be possible, it was just as he had done it, with the same emerald at the top, although only with slight changes in color and small details. Diddy gasped at what he saw and didn't take long to react.

"Oh, but this pyramid is perfect!" exclaimed the teacher, astonished as he observed in detail the pyramid that the orangutan boy showed him. "You even placed an emerald on it. Excellent work, Mr. Jem-"

"Hey, Jemky!" exclaimed Diddy, rising from his seat firmly and running to the teacher's desk where Jemky was. "That's *my* pyramid!"

"What?! You're crazy, monkey!" Jemky replied, giving him a little push. "It's *mine!*"

"So, were you who stole it from me, *burnt fur orangutan?!*"

"MR. DIDDY!" the teacher shouted, rising from his seat in anger. "*WHAT IS THAT DISRESPECT TOWARDS YOUR CLASSMATE?!*"

"But that's my pyramid, mister! *I* did it! *Don't you remember seeing it last week?* Jemky must have changed some details for it," Diddy exclaimed desperately. "*And wait a minute,*" he said to Jemky, staring at him. "And how did you know where my pyramid was, Jemky?! *How did you get into my house?!*"

"But this pyramid is mine!" Jemky replied firmly. "You are insane, monkey!"

"This work is Mr. Jemky's!" Mr. Pinky replied. "You didn't even bring yours, Mr. Diddy!"

"Yeah, go make your own *stupid pyramid*, dwarf monkey fool!" exclaimed Jemky, slapping him on the head.

"MR. JEMKY!" the teacher shouted again. "*YOU TOO WITH THAT LACK OF RESPECT?!*"

"Oh, I'm sorry, mister," Jemky replied with a forced smile.

Diddy was only being consumed by fury at Jemky's chutzpah at submitting that pyramid as if it were his.

"Mr. Pinky... there's something you should know" Diddy was too furious that he even came close to doing something he had never dared to do before. For a moment, he was not afraid of the four bullies and pointed at them. "Those four *are rob-*"

"Hey! What are you going to say, you idiot monkey?!" Jemky shouted, lunging at Diddy and giving him a few repetitive punches.

"STOP IT! OR I'LL FAIL YOU BOTH!" exclaimed the teacher sternly and separated them immediately.

The whole class was anxious watching the discussion that had broken out in a few minutes, but no one said a single word, not even Dixie, who always used to defend Diddy; this time... she was just quiet watching everything. Suddenly, Diddy turned to see her; he remembered that she would be the best witness that the pyramid was his.

"I just have to tell you that *this pyramid* was made by me, Mr. Pinky!" reaffirmed Diddy earnestly before pointing to Dixie. "Ask to *her*!"

"Is that true, Miss Dixie?!" the teacher asked, looking up at her.

Dixie showed an expressionless face. She remained somewhat tense while being watched in all seriousness by Diddy, Jemky and Mr. Pinky; she could confirm the truth to end that argument once and for all.

"Actually," Dixie began by stuttering and looking in various directions. "That pyramid *is* Jemky's."

Everyone was astonished at that answer. The quartet of bad kids showed a malicious smile, Jemky one of victory, Mr. Pinky a serious... and as for Diddy, he was all disappointed and then consumed by a deep indignation that left him on the verge of exploding.

"Dixie?" Diddy whispered, showing himself all shocked and not knowing what was happening to Dixie in those days. "Hey, what are you saying, Dixie?! We made that pyramid togeth-"

"That is Jemky's!" Dixie replied firmly.

"Hey! What's wrong with you?!" Diddy exclaimed to her. "Why are you siding with that fool?! The pyramid was made it by-"

"No! What are you saying, Diddy?!" Dixie interrupted. "It's Jemky's! The pyramid is his!"

"No! What's wrong with you?!... And wait a minut-"

Mr. Pinky slammed his fist on the desk before ending the argument.

"Well, Mr. Diddy, it seems that things are clear! Now you will have to take on the extra recovery exam-"

Suddenly, Diddy couldn't take it anymore, snatched the pyramid from Jemky and threw it at him with all the force he had, hitting him straight in the face. He felt that he unloaded the hatred he had for the four of them for all the evils they had done to him.

"*THAT'S ENOUGH, MR. DIDDY!*" the teacher shouted. "*GO TO YOUR SEAT-*"

Diddy walked to his seat, but took his backpack and walked to the door taking long steps.

"*I HAVEN'T TOLD YOU YET THAT YOU CAN LEAVE, MR. DID D-*"

But Diddy had already reached the door, before exiting and slamming it shut.

Mr. Pinky, all angry at Diddy's attitude, didn't stop him anymore and sat down to calm himself. Jemky, on the other hand, was still rubbing his face from the hit he received from Diddy, but at the same time... he laughed mockingly in a low voice.

"Well! You can go back to your seat, Mr. Jemky," Mr. Pinky said, now reassured. "I think you saved your qualification to access the remedial classes," he finished before raising his voice. "Next one!"

Mr. Pinky continued to check a couple more pyramids, while the rest of the class just muttered about the scandal that had been made a few minutes ago.

Meanwhile, Diddy was heading home at a strong, fast pace, while grumbling. To say that he was just angry was too little for what he really was; he couldn't even think. He had been unfairly failed only because one of his annoying classmates, whom he hated most now, had just stolen his final project, but the worst thing was that Mr. Pinky could not believe him and, as if that were not enough, whom he considered his best friend and with whom he had worked together, preferred to defend the orangutan kid as if nothing. The last few days had been lousy for Diddy who just wanted to go away for a while and forget everything.

On the other hand, in the classroom, Mr. Pinky finished reviewing all the pyramids of the students. He gave a few final words until the class concluded.

"You can leave, sir students!" the teacher announced after a few minutes, rising from his seat. "And well, it was a pleasure to be your replacement teacher! Have a happy vacation... *And don't fight anymore*, please!" he added, looking sideways at the group of four bullies.

Everyone left the classroom, most happy to start the vacation. The group of four bully boys showed a face of malice as they left the classroom. Melenky carried in his hands the emerald of Diddy's pyramid after extracting it from it.

"We'll take this to our dads," Rocky said, pointing to the emerald.

"And finally, they will take us to hunt monsters!" Mandrew added excitedly.

"It turned out better than we expected!" added Jemky in the same way. Then, he turned to look at the entrance of the classroom. "You guys go on... I've reached you later," he told them as he looked sideways at Dixie, who was leaving the classroom.

"Huh? Hey, don't bother Dixie anymore," Rocky said, taking his arm. "We are in a hurry; our dads are waiting for us to leave."

"She shouldn't tell the monkey about this," Jemky replied, letting go. "We have to stop her."

"We just needed this emerald and that's all," Rocky replied. "Not Dixie; she doesn't even love you and she's not going to stop loving that monkey."

"That's not why, but she's going to rat us out with Diddy and with everyone. We have to scare her with another threat so that she doesn't tell them."

"And that doesn't matter!" Mandrew replied. "We aren't going to come here for a long time."

"But as soon as we get back, we'll get into trouble, and our dads could get to know," Jemky exclaimed, letting go of them. "Later I'll reach out to you."

"You're so stubborn!" Rocky replied. "Beware you lose out."

Dixie, who was ahead, was walking home as if trying to speed up her pace, as if she wanted to flee... and as if he wanted to head towards Diddy's house at speed. When suddenly, Jemky stopped her later.

"Wait a minute, Dixie!" said Jemky to Dixie, taking her arm by surprise. "*Where* do you think you're going right now?"

"Huh?! Hey, leave me now!" Dixie replied, trying to pull herself away. "I already gave you the emerald and even the pyramid!"

"You don't have to tell Diddy any of this, *by the way*" he said with a fixed and serious look as he took something out of the pockets of his vest...

Diddy was lying on his tire, all discouraged. He didn't want to know or think about anything, just rest for a while after a bad day. Donkey was close to him to accompany him as he always used to do when his nephew was unwell. Diddy had told him about Mr. Pinky didn't believe in his word and failed him, however, he didn't tell him about the discord he had had with Jemky and that it was he who had his pyramid.

"Don't be sad, buddy," Donkey said, appearing to cheer him up. "We can talk to Wrinkly when she comes and she'll approve of you and believe that your pyramid was really lost. She knows you very well and knows perfectly well that you do fulfill your schoolworks. And rejoice! This week we'll go on vacation."

"I don't want to think about it now, Donkey," Diddy replied in a low voice.

"Oh, little buddy," Donkey said, pitied by Diddy's mood. "You're also sad about Dixie, right?"

"I don't want to remember that either," Diddy said in indignation. "She doesn't even want us to be friends anymore, I don't know what's wrong with her."

"Do you know? I think that kid Jemky is manipulating her," Donkey speculated. "Dixie *is not* like that; something is wrong with all this. I don't think she really meant that to you."

"Yes, of course, and how do you explain that she told the teacher that my pyramid was Jemky's and not mine?" But instantly, he realized that *that* detail hadn't told Donkey. "Uhh, I mean-"

"Wait a minute, Diddy," Donkey interrupted, staring at him and changing his expression. "What did you say?"

"Uh, no, it's that..." Diddy didn't know what to say now. "I meant that Jemky-"

"Diddy... so it's true that... you had a fight with Jemky because he supposedly had your pyramid?"

Diddy was paralyzed to hear Donkey say that, because it was the only detail he had not told him so as not to reveal about the topic of getting along badly with that bully quartet.

"Uhh, no, Donkey!... What are you talking about?" Diddy stuttered, not knowing what excuse to make.

"Diddy, just now I was waiting for you to tell me and explain this," Donkey said in a tone and a look of seriousness. "This afternoon when I went out, Mr. Pinky handed me a *report* about you."

Donkey left for a while and then returned to show a report from Kong Kollege that clearly described what had happened that morning, about the discord with the pyramid.

Diddy froze and didn't know what to say to Donkey; he was always like his older brother and all, but even so, he was the one who had taken care of him all his life, and as such, he could take action with him if there was a disagreement.

"I thought it was a lie, but now that you tell me that about Dixie, so... was it true?" Donkey asked him while Diddy still didn't know what explanation to give. "Tell me, Diddy."

"Uhh, n-no, no! What are you talking about?" Diddy replied.

"Diddy, I won't tell you anything, but I do want you to tell me if you've ever had any problems with those kids at school."

"No, Donkey, I've always told you I'm no longer friends with them because they took distance, that's all," Diddy excused.

Donkey kept doubting Diddy when he denied having any conflict with that group of children.

"Tell me the truth, Diddy!" asked Donkey, looking at him in all seriousness. "Weren't those kids mean to you or something?"

"No! I don't understand where you got those inventions of yours," Diddy replied, not knowing what else to say.

"It's not an invention of mine, I want to know what happens about those children!" Donkey exclaimed.

Then, another argument began between the two of them on the same topic about Diddy's classmates, those discussions that Diddy hated having with Donkey and wanted to end quickly.

"It doesn't matter, we're out on vacation!" Diddy exclaimed.

"But still, I need you to tell me!" Donkey replied, raising his voice. "If Jemky had your pyramid, it's clearly because he stole it from you and that's why you started that conflict with him!"

"Well, who wouldn't get angry having their final project stolen and presented as their own?!"

"And wait a minute! Did that kid come in here at night to steal your pyramid?!"

"I don't know, Donkey! I don't know what you're talking about!" Diddy didn't want to argue anymore and add another burden to his situation, so he got off the tire and ran to his room.

"Hey, Diddy, don't go!" exclaimed Donkey, trying to reach him. *"You have to tell me this well at once! You've never wanted to tell me!"*

"But I have nothing to tell you! "

"Just tell me the truth, Diddy, I command you! This is serious!"

"You don't have to order me!" he exclaimed loudly before slamming the door shut.

Donkey was angry at Diddy's attitude for the umpteenth time and knocked on his door.

"But just tell me, Diddy! "

It was the wee hours of the morning, and Diddy was sitting by the window of his room. He was wondering why he had been doing badly in the past few days. First, when he was about to confess to Dixie, she came out saying she would date Jemky; second, when she told him again to hang out, she stood him up along with Jemky again and told him that they would not be friends anymore; third, when he was going to submit the final schoolwork, Jemky stole it and Mr. Pinky failed him, and even Dixie, who was supposed to confirm that the pyramid was his, preferred to be on Jemky's side; and, to top it off, he had just had another argument with Donkey over the topic of his bad classmates.

Diddy came down from the window and was going to go to his bed. But suddenly, he came across a photo... it was the one Dixie had given him about the two of them. He immediately remembered that in low moments like that, it was Dixie who was there to accompany and cheer him on... But this time, she was the main reason for his low moment. On previous occasions, the two of them had had small disagreements or fights, but they had never been that way as it had happened. He just wondered why Dixie had been acting like this; he never expected it from her. Diddy couldn't handle the indignation anymore and tore the photo in half, followed by this, he threw the two pieces out the window.

He didn't know what else to do at that time anymore. To cheer up and calm down a little in bad situations, Diddy liked to go for a walk, either through the jungle or the beach, but this time, he wanted to go to the beach, and so he decided...

He left his house stealthily, no matter it was very late, and walked to the beach. When he got there, he sat for a while in the sand to think... although his thoughts were not the best at that time. So, he got up to walk a little towards the seashore.

Suddenly, feeling the water through his feet, transmitted a certain tranquility... So, he decided to do something else that would be entertaining. He looked around and, with some pieces of wood nearby, he prepared to assemble a small raft, small enough for him to enter.

After that, he went into the sea and got on the mini raft. Breathing fresh air, seeing the sea water and the night sky could relax him after some bad events. A cold wind was felt around, but Diddy didn't care about it and just enjoyed it too.

But that tranquility was interrupted when, as if by magic, a piece of the photo that he had recently torn landed right in front of him... and, precisely, it was the piece where Dixie appeared. He took it,

looked at it for a few seconds and, remembering what happened, wanted to throw it again... But he just watched it for several more seconds.

“Dixie...” he said quietly.

He couldn't deny it, he missed Dixie so much and just wished she was there with him too. Diddy tried to restrain himself, but he couldn't and some tears and light sobs escaped him... But then, he continued with his mini walk by the sea, trying to cheer himself up a little until the discomfort could pass, so that later he could return home quietly...

Chapter 20: Mysteries and Strange Finds

The next day, Donkey got up a little later than usual, and assumed that Diddy would do the same because he was no longer going to have classes. Even if the day seemed calm, he felt a little bad that he had argued with his nephew the night before, even though it wasn't the first time they had argued for the same reason. Donkey wanted to go see him to clear things up and went to his room.

"Diddy, are you awake?" knocked on the door, which was adjusted so he could pass without problems. "Little buddy, I just wanted to talk with-"

When Donkey came in, he only saw the things in Diddy's room, but there was no trace of his nephew, which seemed a bit weird to him.

"Diddy?" called him again.

Donkey searched for him all over his room, but for some reason, Diddy wasn't there. Then, he looked for and called him all over the house, but received no answer, which was looking unusual at that time.

"DIDDY!"

Maybe he assumed his nephew had been out for a while because of the bad days he'd had, so he decided to wait a little longer.

After breakfast, Donkey stayed home for a couple of hours, but Diddy wasn't there yet? That was getting pretty weird to him. He also went to look for him in the cave where they stored the banana reserve, but he didn't receive any response either.

He decided to go to Funky's house to ask if Diddy wasn't there or if he hadn't seen him on the beach.

"Funky!" called him Donkey from afar while Funky was adjusting some devices.

"How are you, brother?" Funky greeted him just before noticing his concern. "What's wrong?"

"By any chance, Diddy hasn't been here?"

"No, brother, I haven't seen him. Why?"

"I wanted to talk to him, but when I went into his room, he wasn't there... And I don't know where he is now."

"Hmm, maybe he's walking around. But at least me, I haven't seen him today."

Donkey just looked away, while becoming more concerned.

Then, he went to Cranky's cabin to look for him, where there was no one, but he had access anyway. But there he found no trace of his little nephew either. So, he went to Candy's house.

"I haven't seen him, honey, why?" Candy replied after Donkey asked about Diddy.

"I haven't seen him almost all morning either. I called him all over the house and he wasn't there."

"And won't he be at school thinking that there are still classes or did he have something pending to do? He may have had to go there as an emergency."

Donkey turned to Kong Kollege to make sure. There was only Mr. Pinky arranging some papers of the outgoing students.

"Mr. Pinky, good morning," Donkey said as he entered.

"How are you, Mr. Donkey?" Pinky replied formally. "What brings you here?"

"Just in case, Diddy hasn't come here?"

"No, Mr. Donkey. In fact, he should have come to pick up his certificate and talk about how we could make up for his final work. What has happened to him?"

"I haven't seen him for most of the morning, and he's not in the house."

"Well, no, Mr. Donkey, I haven't seen him."

After still no affirmative answers, Donkey went to Lanky's house. Although it would be unusual for Diddy to be there, he went anyway to make sure.

"I haven't seen the little guy these last few days, Donkey," Lanky said. "Haven't you asked Swanky?"

And finally, he went to Swanky, where he also had no hope of finding him, but wanted to make sure anyway.

"No, the last time I saw him was when we met over the weekend, Donkey," Swanky said.

Donkey went home again, had lunch, and it was past noon... But his nephew still gave no signs. It was very strange, since he didn't know how to leave like that without telling Donkey. Diddy used to leave his house freely, but in cases of being absent for long hours, he always informed Donkey. He still didn't want to think anything wrong, even if he was already starting to do so because it was his little nephew.

Minutes later, Donkey heard voices calling him from outside his house. He leaned out the window and, to his surprise, there were Funky, Candy, Lanky and Swanky downstairs waiting for him. Donkey wondered what the four of them had come to together, but he guessed maybe his friends had news about Diddy... and it was what he most expected to hear at the time. He got out of his house and hurried to his friends.

"What happened, friends?" Donkey asked them, finishing down the stairs.

"Bro..." Funky said with an apparent worried face. "By any chance, Diddy has already appeared?"

"No, I thought you were going to tell me you found him," Donkey replied, looking disappointed.

Suddenly, the faces of the other kongs became even more worried and looked at each other as if they had something important to say.

"What? What's wrong?!" Donkey asked them with all the unknown when he saw their expressions.

"I don't want to scare you, bro," Funky replied in a way that made Donkey more worried than he already was. "But... we just found out that... there is recently found on the banks of the river an ape kid Diddy's age, apparently..." Funky paused deeply before continuing, "...*drowned*..."

"*WHAT?!?*"

Donkey felt as if he received a hard blow to his stomach and the circulation went down to his feet with force when he heard that from Funky. He began to think about thousands of terrible things.

"No, but calm down, honey... I don't think it's Diddy!" Candy added, trying to calm him down immediately. "He is well known here. If it were him, we would have already been told."

"Wait, wait, wait...!" Donkey exclaimed, breathing hard and trying to stay calm as best he could. "W-where did you get that?! Where did that happen about the child you mention?!"

"Right now, everyone is scandalized by that!" Swanky replied. "They are gathered in the place where they found him."

"In fact, they want to see you to look at the situation, brother," Funky added. "Come, let's see the scene!"

Donkey immediately went with his friends to the place they indicated. On the way, he just begged that what they said wasn't true, or worse... that it was Diddy.

They reached the banks of a river, where there was a big crowd of apes piled up and scandalized by the supposed find that had just been mentioned.

"Oh, Donkey Kong, good thing you arrived!" a gorilla in the crowd exclaimed, showing alarm. "You can't even imagine what happened here!"

"Where is the kid that was found?!" Donkey asked him desperately.

"Oh, you don't even know another detail! That child *wasn't* exactly drowned, but he had been... *wounded*; he had a wound on his chest," another gorilla commented, to which everyone made a gesture of horror and fear. "And now you don't even know what else happened: some unknown ones took him away!"

"Was he taken away?!" Funky asked the same way. "And who were those ones?"

Donkey began to feel more worried than he already was that he couldn't even think well at the moment. He just felt like his blood was freezing.

"Wasn't it the Kremlings?!" Donkey added, suspicious of those reptiles from King K. Rool's army.

"No, we saw that they were *apes*, but they had dark cloaks on to cover themselves. We couldn't see their faces!" replied another kong.

"And didn't you see if just in case the kid was *my nephew Diddy?!?*" Donkey asked them, very worried.

"Your nephew is a little monkey with a red cap, isn't he?"

"Yeah!" Donkey replied anguished and fearing the answer.

"No, it wasn't him," the other apes replied, to which Donkey and his friends felt a slight relief. "The found child was not wearing red clothes, but we could not see what species he was. A group of us went to chase the apes who took the child's body away, but they still haven't returned."

"And... was the child alive or not?" Candy asked the apes.

"Apparently... No. S-some say he was all unconscious, had a frightful wound on his chest and didn't move."

"What a horror!" Donkey exclaimed indignantly. "How can somebody do that to a little one?"

"By the way, what happened to your nephew, Donkey?" asked one of the kongs in the crowd.

"He's lost and I haven't seen him all day," Donkey replied, now all worried. "And the truth is that this is already very strange and... Ugh! I don't want to think the worst," he added, putting his hands to his temple as Candy tried to calm him down.

"This sounds to me like there's a child thief!" Lanky speculated. "But this is something we need to figure out fast!"

Everyone stood for another while, watching the scene. Donkey was the one who had to stay calm, and in turn try to calm the community, so he warned everyone to take care of their little ones; the situation was becoming increasingly dark and suspicious. But at the same time, it was almost impossible for him to remain calm knowing that his nephew didn't appear and now he had just been informed that a kong boy had been wounded.

The only place Donkey hadn't asked yet was none other than Dixie and her family's house. He thought maybe Diddy could have fixed things with Dixie and was spending some more time with his friends... or at least that's what he wanted to think. Although the strange thing about that is that he never went out without saying where when he was away for a long time. Even so, Donkey only wished with the last hope that this group of young kongs would give him a positive answer about Diddy.

Donkey went to Dixie's house to ask. As soon as he arrived, Chunky met him at the door.

"Hi, Chunky," Donkey greeted him in a hurry. "B-By any chance, hasn't Diddy been here?"

"No, Chunky hasn't seen him for three days," Chunky replied, before calling the rest. "Tiny! Kiddy! Donkey asks if you've seen Diddy, haven't you?"

"No, we haven't heard from him," Tiny replied, appearing with Kiddy at the door, and Kiddy shook his head. "Why?"

"I haven't seen him all day, he hasn't even eaten in the house," Donkey replied worriedly. "And Dixie? Doesn't she know something about him? By the way... weren't they fighting because of that new little boyfriend of hers or something?"

"What? What are you talking about?" Chunky asked him with a look of strangeness.

"About Dixie. That is... has she had a mishap with Diddy because of that boy she says she is dating?"

"What? No, she hasn't told us anything like that," Tiny replied in confusion. "In fact, she explained to us that Jemky is not even her boyfriend... She said it was all a joke she wanted to make on us," she whispered.

"What?! But Diddy told me that Dixie told him two days ago that she didn't want to be his friend anymore because of that."

"Where did you get that?" Tiny said with a look of surprise. "Two days ago, the two of them even hung out until very late at night."

"Too late at night?!" exclaimed Donkey in kind. "But Diddy returned to the house in *less than* half an hour."

"Well, I don't know, Dixie came back very late and said she hung out with Diddy all day," Tiny replied with a shrug. "Although... my sister has been very strange these past few days, did you know?"

"Yeah, yesterday when she came home from school, she was all paleface and was talking to us tremblingly," Chunky added in the same tone. "We asked her what was wrong but she only told us that she was tired because it was the last day of school."

"And today she just spent in her room taking naps," Tiny added. "But hey, she may really be very tired; just now she is sleeping."

Everyone was confused, as their versions didn't fit well and the situation was becoming a bit strange. On the other hand, Dixie was not present; apparently, she was in her room as mentioned by Tiny.

"What are you talking about, Donkey?! A wounded child in the river?!" Tiny exclaimed in alarm when Donkey told them the latest event.

"That's right, that's why I'm worried about Diddy too. We fear that some thug or a child thief is on the loose, and Diddy has been a victim."

"Oh, no, I hope that's not going to be another group of bad apes!" Chunky added in anguish, to which Tiny and Kiddy were frightened as when they had just arrived on the island, and clung to Chunky immediately.

"No, but don't worry, kids, we'll try to get everything under control," Donkey said, calming them down. "Tell Dixie this too, please, and if she knows anything about Diddy, *let us know*."

"Okay, Donkey," Chunky replied as he hugged Tiny and Kiddy. "B-but what about the child thief?"

"No, don't worry, that's not confirmed yet," Donkey added. "Of course, for now, I only ask that you all don't leave your house too much, and if you need to, you can meet with us. We'll be backing you up against anything, you know."

Donkey said goodbye to the three and left. He continued on his way back to the scene of the alleged crime. But first, he decided to go out and find Diddy again; he didn't want to think that he also ended up like that kong boy found in the river. Diddy was always like his younger brother or son, and if something terrible were to happen to him, Donkey's whole world would fall apart.

Donkey walked near streams, rivers, and lakes to see if he found any trace of Diddy; obviously, it wasn't what he wanted to find in that way, but still, he wanted to make sure. He was walking among the trees near a lake, when suddenly, he felt under his foot a small object with a rough texture. When he looked at the floor, he realized that it was a tiny gift box lid that had a tiny red ribbon and was covered with pink glitter and, a few centimeters away, the box was lying on the floor: this was so small that it could occupy only a quarter of the palm of his hand... But what caught his attention the most was that, underneath it, was a piece of paper. Donkey wasn't in the mood to browse, but it was so bright and colorful that he couldn't help but pick it up and take a quick look.

Donkey opened his eyes as much as he could when he unfolded that piece of paper and discovered that it was a writing, but what surprised him most was what it said:

"Diddy, you're my best friend, you've become someone special to me, I really love you and I like spending time with you. It's hard for me to tell you this head-on, Diddy, but really... I like you."

The note ended with a signature from no one but *Dixie*, and with a heart drawn next to it. That made an impression on Donkey, as both he and Diddy knew Dixie's handwriting and signature, and the note was identical to hers. For a few seconds, Donkey smiled as he read what he said; for a moment it crossed his mind to go show that to Diddy and he knew that would make him a lot happy... But within seconds, he came back to reality. With all the situation he was going through, he couldn't have the excitement he should, as he now just wanted to know *where* Diddy was.

Night had fallen. After the news of the child found in the river, all the inhabitants began to be alarmed, since that was very strange and it was something that didn't usually happen on the island. Donkey had passed by his house and had gone out about five times in the jungle, both for that matter and also, to make sure where Diddy was... But mysteriously, he didn't appear. Now, Donkey was too worried; he hadn't seen Diddy since the night before and he never knew how to get lost like that. The last time Diddy disappeared was when he had been locked in a barrel by the kremlings the time he tried to take care of the banana reserve, that season with kremlings on the island.

He was beginning to think the worst: what if King K. Rool had returned and taken him away? Or had his four classmates, whom he always suspected, done something to him? Or did Dixie have anything to do with it? Or maybe a child kidnapper was on the loose and took him and the boy found in the river away?... Or maybe Diddy only escaped because of the bad days he'd had?

It's known that Diddy had gone for a ride in the sea the night before, but that was only for a while. Had something bad happened to him on the way?

Donkey couldn't stop; even at night he continued looking for his nephew and even asked again at his friends' houses, but none gave him any positive news. Now that was too strange. Candy even accompanied him to his house so she could calm him down and give him some hope that Diddy would appear at any moment.

Donkey lay down to sleep very late, he couldn't even sleep. Even in the wee hours he got up again and again to look for Diddy. The worry of not knowing what could have happened to him was enormous and only tormented him more and more.

Chapter 21: Disappearance

The next day, Donkey got up, and the first thing he did was go to Diddy's room in hopes of finding him sleeping... but he was still absent. *"Oh no,"* Donkey thought with utmost concern.

Donkey was already getting desperate and started calling the entire Kong family so that they could all look for Diddy together. They searched several places on the island. From Funky to Kiddy helped to search for him, even Mr. Pinky, who was still on DK Island.

Dixie, who had already spoken out, had also said that she hadn't heard anything about Diddy for two days and, of course, she also looked very worried about him... In fact, it was as if everything she had told him a few days ago didn't seem to be true.

The entire Kong family was reunited, in addition to several inhabitants of the island, still with the unknown for the case of Diddy's missing, and added to the case of the child in the river. Everyone pointed out that it would be some kong children kidnapper group.

"Really... hasn't Diddy appeared?" Dixie asked, looking distressed.

"No, no one has heard from him," Funky replied worriedly. "By the way, Dixie, you who are his closest friend, don't you know what could have happened to him?"

"Right, Dixie," Tiny added in the same way. "And by the way... is it true that you were fighting or something?"

"Not exactly... Or well, yes," Dixie replied. Apparently, not quite sure what she was saying. "We did have a little mishap, but I don't think it has anything to do with that."

Suddenly, Donkey arrived to inform the crowd of new details. He had a face of maximum concern that everyone noticed and only worried them more.

"What happened, Donkey?" Candy asked. "What did those who went to rescue the found child say?"

"They didn't manage to rescue the child, but they just gave me more details," Donkey replied earnestly. "Those who went to follow the mysterious apes that took the little one away, said that maybe it is a gang that steals children. They didn't manage to reach them, but they could notice some things while following them: the child found had a serious wound in the chest, also had several scratches, and apparently was wrapped in some leaves.

"What a horror!" Lanky exclaimed, and at the same time the rest of the kongs also made gestures of horror and panic simultaneously. "And didn't they know the child?"

"No, but they said he was a boy with light fur on his head," Donkey said. "The clothing couldn't be identified."

"With light fur, huh?" said Mr. Pinky pensively. "Well, in the class there were about six children with light fur on their heads."

"And just in case, don't you know if all of them have been okay?" Donkey asked the teacher. "Have they been contacted at school, Mr. Pinky?"

"Well, most did," Master Pinky replied. "Although now that I remember, yesterday they should have all gone to school to pick up their certificates from the school year, and the only ones who haven't gone are... Messrs. Jemky, Mandrew, Melenky and Rocky, and Mr. Diddy too... He still doesn't appear, right?"

Everyone was silent and pensive with the teacher's statement. The most concerned at the time was Donkey, since he always had bad vibes from that group of children, and in that situation, they had not been the exception in the suspicions he had regarding Diddy's missing.

"Wait a minute, this is very... *suspicious* with what you just mentioned," Donkey said with a frown. "Do you know something? That group of four children that Mr. Pinky mentioned, always gave me a bad vibe. Besides, while we're here, I ask... Hadn't that orangutan boy, Jemky, stolen the pyramid from Diddy?"

"No, that pyramid was Mr. Jemky's," Pinky replied. "Even Miss Dixie affirmed it, Mr. Donkey."

"What?! N-no, it's not true," Dixie reaffirmed in a trembling voice. "The pyramid... was actually Diddy's, Mr. Pinky."

"Huh?! But you yourself said the opposite in class," the teacher contradicted.

"Well... Oh, it was only Diddy's," Dixie replied, showing some insecurity.

"Hey, wait a minute," Donkey said, calming them all down before heading to Dixie. "Dixie, don't you really know anything about Diddy?... That group of kids didn't fight with him or something?"

Dixie was silent... It crossed his mind that Diddy's missing had to do with the quartet. She wanted to tell everyone the truth about that bully quartet, but she couldn't reveal the secret she had promised to keep for Diddy for a long time. In turn, everyone looked at her with some suspicion.

"Uhh... N-No, I don't know anything," she replied tremblingly, which everyone could notice. "And no, he never had any mishap with them."

Suddenly, Donkey also remembered that note he found the day before, which was clearly written by Dixie for Diddy. He had even kept it, but he didn't want to show it to Dixie so as not to be reckless. What was a little strange about that note was that, at the time he found it, it was dropped on the floor along with the box.

"Dixie," Donkey said, looking at her extremely seriously, even thinking several things. "Whatever important thing you have to say, you must tell. Diddy doesn't appear, a kong child was found wounded, and we don't want to think that there is a child kidnapper or worse."

"B-but I don't know anything about Diddy," replied Dixie.

"Wait a minute!" Lanky said suddenly. "They said that the child found had light fur... Wasn't that child Jemky, and Diddy did that to him in revenge for stealing the pyramid?"

"What are you saying? Diddy would never be able to do something like that," Donkey replied earnestly. "And it's unusual for a child to try to hurt another child that big."

"Or maybe it's the capuchin monkey boy," Funky added pensively. "The one called Rocky; he had light fur on his head."

"Well, I think a gang that steals children is on the loose," Swanky added. "How do you explain the alleged apes who took that child away?"

"Or isn't all this a plan of King K. Rool?" Lanky added.

"Well, if we keep discussing it, we won't achieve anything. We have to keep searching for Diddy," Donkey snapped. "And also, that alleged gang that steals children."

Donkey went on to speak to the entire community to give them some recommendations. The kong inhabitants were all in an uproar and some were outraged by the discovery of that child.

"*Attention everyone!*" Donkey exclaimed, catching the attention of the community. "As you know, there was a child hurt and stolen, and also my nephew Diddy doesn't appear, so I keep asking you to take care of your children, and those who want and can, help us solve these mysteries. If we find these thugs who thief children, rest assured that they will be *punished*, and together we'll make them pay the consequences! *No one messes with the little ones!*"

The whole community gave screams of fury while they showed immense desire to search for the alleged child thieves.

Everyone else picked up the search for Diddy on various sites. There were many suspicions, but no one could assure anything.

Later, Dixie was alone near a stream, still searching for Diddy, and with all the anguish of not knowing anything about him. When suddenly, she saw a piece of paper flying near her, which out of curiosity, she picked up and observed... What it contained made her very sad immediately: it was the other half of the broken photo she had given Diddy and, of course, only Diddy appeared in that fragment. Dixie guessed that maybe Diddy got really angry with her for what she told him, and that's why he broke it.

"Hey! Trixie! Or whatever your name," said someone behind her. Dixie turned around but didn't see anyone at first. "This way! In the water!"

Dixie looked down at the stream to see who it was. The voice belonged to a blue swordfish she had met before.

"Hello... *Enguarde* was your name, right?" asked Dixie.

"Yeah, the same," he replied, rather agitated in the water and showing that he wanted to say something fast. "It's about D-Diddy! He has been kidnapped!"

"W-what?! What are you talking about?!"

Dixie felt his blood run cold at the news, and various speculations began to invade her mind.

"And do you know where he is?!" Dixie asked, almost throwing herself into the stream. "Didn't he be taken away by some ugly and bad ape children?!"

"No, they weren't apes! Yesterday in the wee hours I saw him at sea sailing on a small raft, it was quite far from this island, by the way. I was going to greet him, but before I arrived, some very strong lights appeared. They were boats where there were tall creatures with long arms and legs and small heads! *They took him away!*"

Dixie felt even more panic... What kind of creature would take Diddy away? She had thought all along that they might have been those bad kids from school, but if Enguarde was telling her they weren't apes, then what were they about?

"Oh, no! But do you know where?" asked Dixie with anguish and despair. "Tell me everything in detail, please!"

"That's where I come from! I followed those creatures and it was a long journey of perhaps more than ten hours. They arrived on a huge and very strange island with giant houses, on the beaches there were more creatures like that, and those unknown ones took him further inside that island," Enguarde explained with all desperation. "B-but from there I didn't know anything more about him! There was no one to turn to for help! So, I came back again to let you guys know and-"

"Wait, wait!" exclaimed Dixie, calming him down. "But... can we still go to *that island* you're talking about?"

"It's too far, but I can guide you all to go and-"

"No!" Dixie interrupted firmly and with a serious look. "Only *I* want to go."

"What are you talking about?!"

"*WHAT?!!*" exclaimed the entire Kong family, who were gathered on the beach after a long search, when Dixie told them what Enguarde had informed her.

"So, if he says they weren't apes... it's another gang stealing children. We have to go for him!" Donkey said, getting everyone to join him. "Let's all go find Diddy! We already know where-"

"No, no, no!" Dixie interrupted, calming them down, before showing a look of seriousness. "I'm going to go!... Surely this is my fault," she added in an anguished tone.

"Are you crazy?!" Tiny exclaimed, looking at her strangely. "You can't go alone to an unknown place. And why do you say it's your fault?"

"It's that... Well, a few days ago I told Diddy that we will no longer be friends, and surely, he thought I meant it, but it is not like that."

"Still, it's not your fault they took him away, Dixie," Candy added with a shrug.

"But they wouldn't have taken him away if he hadn't gone out at that time," replied Dixie. "He must have felt bad about everything that happened, surely that's why he left the house, and therefore he was kidnapped."

"But... why do you say that?" Donkey asked, looking at her strangely. "And why did you tell him that and treat him like that, Dixie?"

"I didn't mean to treat him like that! It was our classmates, they-" Dixie didn't want to talk anymore, since her explanation, apparently... implied the secret that she had long ago promised Diddy to keep, but she had no other one this time. "In fact, a few days ago... J-Jemky was the one who forced me to tell Diddy that we weren't friends anymore and to steal his pyramid, or else... he said he would finish him off right then and there."

"What?!" Donkey exclaimed, being astonished at what Dixie was saying and the way she explained things. "B-But how's that? I mean, why could he have threatened you like that? What are you talking about, Dixie?"

"Those four kids were armed!" Dixie suddenly confessed.

Instantly, everyone was shocked at what Dixie revealed and gave cries of astonishment. Now, especially Donkey, he was already having too many suspicions about that quartet of evil children.

"What are you talking about, Dixie?! Seriously?!" Donkey exclaimed, beginning to get panicked, and the rest of the kongs became much more worried. "I knew those four gave me a bad vibe!"

"Tell us well, what was there with those four boys?!" Mr. Pinky asked, before the rest of the kongs began to bombard her with questions about what she had just said, which made her too nervous to the point of being reflected in her face.

"Dixie...!" Donkey said, staring at her firmly. "Tell us more, I know you have something important to tell. If you can do it, I ask you to do it, please, this is serious. H-how those kids were armed?! What are you talking about?!"

Dixie was very hesitant, but that was an emergency situation, and she thought it would be no good to hide what she knew anymore. *"I'm sorry, Diddy,"* she said in her mind.

"Well... I'll tell you all this, but... if you let me go find Diddy... okay?"

Dixie, with no other choice, explained everything about that quartet of bully children, since when Diddy was friends with them, followed by the cause of the enmity between them, how she defended Diddy at school and they stopped bothering him so much, until the latest news where she reported that they were armed again... and that even recently *she had been threatened* for some reason.

"... and the night before the last day of school, those four told me not to say anything about Diddy's pyramid, or else... they would attack the whole class the next day," Dixie said. "Yes, they carried those guns stored on the last day of school."

Everyone in the Kong family was completely shocked by what Dixie had just told, which left them thinking and gave them more ideas about what might have happened.

"I knew those kids were evil and Diddy didn't want to tell me!" Donkey said, shocked with everything said and hitting the ground. "So, was it all because of a threat?"

"Yes, I would never have said anything like that to Diddy," Dixie said. "And please... I ask you not to go tell Diddy that I told you... I promised him I wasn't going to tell anyone."

"But why didn't Diddy tell it before?" Donkey replied. "Those things shouldn't be hidden, Dixie, it is a serious situation!"

"He was afraid... that if he reported them, they would hurt you," Dixie replied, regretting revealing it a little. "He feared most of all for Donkey and Wrinkly... And I just tried to understand him and I also covered it up all the time."

"But we wouldn't have had any problems!" Donkey reaffirmed. "We'd only have contacted the parents of those children to take action towards them, that's all... Anyways, we'll not get anything if we continue like this. We must continue to find clues about this whole situation."

"Hey, and how could those kids carry guns and behave like that?" Lanky asked, still shocked. "I mean... they're little ones! Or what kind of parents would they have?"

The entire Kong family continued to murmur loudly about the situation, while each drew quick conclusions about what might have happened. Meanwhile, Dixie still kept quiet, although she later interrupted them.

"Okay, so... I'll go find Diddy," Dixie said, looking up.

"Hey, no, Dixie, we must go with you for that!" Funky said, and the others insisted the same thing. "What if those tall creatures who took Diddy away are the child stealers and they also take you away?"

"Yeah, just look at the case of the boy found in the river," Chunky added.

"Wait a minute!" Lanky interrupted. "And aren't those same Diddy's classmates to blame for all this? What if they are accomplices of the gang child stealers and did something to that found kid?... And I hope that with Diddy they haven't done the same."

"No, no...!" interrupted Dixie. "Well, I don't think there's a gang that steals children. I mean... Enguarde said that Diddy was taken away by creatures that *were not apes*. About the child found in the river, I don't know anything... Why don't you all stay better to continue investigating that case? Just watch out for those bad kids from school... I'll go find Diddy!" she ended by being determined.

The Kongs remained silent, worried but at the same time amazed at Dixie's bold attitude.

"Dixie... are you sure?" Funky asked at the same time that the rest of the Kong family looked at her with concern.

"Of course," Dixie reaffirmed, trying to show herself bravely. "I promise you that I will bring him back."

Dixie was in her room looking for her backpack, and then went around the house to pick up some things she would need for the journey she was about to make. Then her sister and two cousins came to see her.

"Dixie... are you really going to do that?" Tiny asked with extreme concern. "It's dangerous!"

"We'll go with you!" exclaimed Chunky in the same way. "In no way do we intend to leave you."

"What?! No! Of course not," Dixie replied firmly. "I don't want to expose you to danger because of something I must fix. I don't know exactly what the place where Diddy was taken away is like."

"Well, neither do you! You shouldn't expose yourself like that," replied Tiny. "What if you get lost?... We don't want to lose you too, Dixie," she added with a melancholy look.

"You just don't understand..." Dixie added, putting her hands to her head. "This is something that I think *only I* should take on."

"And what about the alleged gang that steals children?!" Chunky replied, fearful. "How about getting caught?... Or well, you, Tiny or Kiddy."

Dixie stared at them for a while, while she didn't know how to convince them to let her go alone. She didn't want to get her relatives in trouble and at least she needed them to be calm.

"Hey... I trust you and I want you to be a little calmer," Dixie told them in a somewhat trembling voice. "I-I need to tell you *something else that happened...* but please... promise me that for *nothing* in the world you will tell anyone, really," she added, approaching them as the three looked at her strangely.

Dixie and her family returned to the shores of the beach where the entire Kong family was; she was ready to go. Enguarde was also near the beach waiting for Dixie. Almost everyone didn't agree with her drifting, but Dixie told them several times that she could. Everyone, although looking at her with considerable concern, was saying goodbye to her, her relatives being the last to do so.

"Dixie..." Tiny said with all the concern in the world for her sister. "Take good care of yourself, okay? We don't want anything bad to happen to you too."

Her sister and two cousins hugged her before she left, and she reciprocated each with the same expression.

"Don't worry, Diddy couldn't have gone far either," Dixie told them with a small smile, though deep down, she was worried about them too and hugged them again. "Take care of yourselves too, and I want to ask you something... Stay with others, don't walk alone, okay?... And keep calm about that topic, *you know*," she whispered in the last sentence.

After all that, Dixie didn't know if she was actually doing well or not, although she wanted to get the idea that maybe Diddy wouldn't be that far away and bringing him back would be simple. She said goodbye to everyone, and then headed towards the sea where Enguarde was. Like Diddy, she also assembled a small raft and tied it with a rope to Enguarde's tail; she could have ridden him, but she needed more space to carry some bananas to eat and a space to sleep, although she probably won't. Dixie climbed onto the raft, ready to go.

"Are you sure, Dixie?" Enguarde asked. "This journey will be very long."

"For Diddy, of course... I must fix all this."

After all that, they headed out to sea. Later, Dixie turned for the last time to look at the island and the entire Kong family who were getting smaller and smaller in the distance...

Chapter 22: The Quest

Chapter Notes

The next five chapters will be somewhat long and with paragraphs of a lot of text. But some still have details that will be used later.

In the middle of the open sea, there was Dixie who, with the help of Enguarde, was on her way to search for Diddy on the island that the blue swordfish had indicated. Dixie also carried a backpack with a few bananas as provisions for the road, as well as some sheets of paper and a pencil, and even the middle of the photo where Diddy appeared, the same one she had given him weeks before.

The journey took all night and had lasted so long that it became exhausting. But even so, Dixie knew she had to go get Diddy, go back to DK Island, and consequently fix things with him. Dixie only hoped that he was okay and nothing bad had happened to him, since the only thing that still came to mind was that the group of bully children had to do with his disappearance, although Enguarde had claimed that the ones who had taken him away were not apes.

Most of the scenarios that could be seen along the way, were of pure horizons, and only a few islands could be seen in the distance from time to time. Between times, Dixie came to think that they had been lost, but Enguarde claimed to remember the road well. The journey had been too long, and Dixie hadn't even slept even if she wanted to; instead, she decided to write down on one of the sheets all the way to come back later. A cold wind was also beginning to be felt during the trip, and even the sky was cloudy enough to be a normal day, but Dixie tried to stand firm and didn't take it seriously.

After so much travel, which had perhaps taken more than ten hours and even saw the dawn, Enguarde announced that they were already close. They had spotted the island where he claimed to have last seen Diddy... although this island was not exactly like it was thought.

"Is that... the *island*?" Dixie asked, astonished to see how it looked. That 'island' was not as she had imagined it: with jungles and a lot of trees... It was rather a *city*, with houses and big buildings. Dixie hadn't seen such a city for many, many years. "Are you sure it's here?"

"Yeah, this is where they took Diddy away, I saw it. Those creatures carried him in a cage."

Finally, they reached the shores of the sea. Now they were on a desolate beach overlooking some very tall buildings. Dixie couldn't believe that Diddy might be in that place, as it seemed to be very strange. She was beginning to question whether she had done well to get there and to have gotten there alone. She wanted to return to DK Island, but she couldn't leave Diddy, much less if Enguarde claimed that he had been *kidnapped* by some unknown creatures.

"And now what?" Dixie said as she saw how extensive the beach was and much more so the city. She didn't know where to go to find Diddy.

"It's supposed that he was taken away inside this island," Enguarde replied, pointing with his nose. "Go search for him, I'll wait for you here."

Dixie watched all the sprawling scenery she could see and didn't know where to start. She thought that maybe it wouldn't be so easy, let alone returning home. She remembered her sister, her cousins and all the other kongs, and was even about to regret having decided to undertake that journey, but she couldn't.

"No... You can go back to DK Island if you want," she told Enguarde. "At least tell the others that I arrived okay... and that I'll keep searching for Diddy and then we'll come back."

"What?! But you're going to get lost when you two come back," replied Enguarde worriedly.

"Don't worry, I've written down all the way back. When I find Diddy, we'll build some boat or raft and return. I hope we get out of here quickly," she added, looking at the whole sprawling city.

"Okay... if you say so," replied Enguarde, very worried and not so convinced to leave Dixie. "Just be careful, okay?"

"Okay," Dixie said with a little smile. "Thanks for everything, Enguarde. Now I must go for Diddy."

All that said, Enguarde gave Dixie one last look, and then set off back to DK Island. Meanwhile, Dixie continued to walk along the beach looking for some way to find out where Diddy was.

She walked for a few minutes along the long beach without finding anything, until she finally caught something out: in the distance, there were some creatures, some in the sand and others in the sea. Dixie ran towards them and, when she was closer, she could see their details better... To her surprise, they were identical to how Enguarde had described them: long arms and legs, tall, and small-headed... They were *human people*. In fact, Dixie had seen human people before in her life; one of those occasions was when some ones tried to kidnap her along with Tiny and Kiddy years ago, and the other was when she was very young and living in a circus with her family, so Dixie didn't know what to think about it. Those people were enjoying the beach with their colorful swimsuits and umbrellas, as well as beach toys for the little ones.

Before fully reaching them, Dixie hid behind some huge rocks to get a better look at people. She looked at them strangely since Enguarde had indicated that such creatures had taken Diddy away... but those people were seen as too cheerful and harmless for them to do such a thing; now Dixie was confused, but at least she hoped that Diddy wasn't with some human who was bad, like those with who once she had that terrible event about their parents.

Dixie, although a little doubtful, decided to get out of hiding and began to walk through the crowd of people. If she wanted to find Diddy, she would have to question one of them if they had him or had seen him.

"*A MONKEY!*" one of the people shouted suddenly, getting the attention of everyone else.

With that shout, the crowd began to turn and be amazed to see Dixie. She looked at them strangely at that reaction, but did not take them care and went to one of the groups of humans to speak to them.

"Uhh, hello?" Dixie told them. "Excuse me, I wanted to know if you have seen a monke-"

"AHHH, DON'T GET NEAR TO ME!" cried one of the men in a terrified manner.

"No, no, I won't hurt you, I just want to know if--"

"AHHHHH!" shouted the whole group of people before running away.

The entire crowd began to panic because of Dixie's presence. Some were clearly terrified while others murmured looking at her with tension. Dixie began to feel uncomfortable being the center of attention and at the expression of terror in people by her presence, but she couldn't give up and continued to try to talk to one of them. So, she went to another group of people to talk to them.

"Hey, I just wanted to ask if a monkey hasn't come here--"

"GET AWAY, MONKEY!" cried a woman looking terrified and away from her.

"Ugh! I won't hurt you; I just want you to tell me if you've seen a monkey with a red cap!" Dixie exclaimed, raising her voice and losing her patience.

But with that shout, the crowd became much more frightened. Some started running off the beach all in an uproar. Dixie couldn't believe at all how such people could have taken Diddy away if they feared her.

"Don't be afraid, it's a harmless little creature!" exclaimed a young man with other people, who were heading to Dixie. Apparently, they were people who didn't show fear towards her.

"Hello, little monkey, did you get lost?" said a woman addressing Dixie and speaking to her in a sweet tone.

"No, I'm not lost," Dixie replied before explaining the situation. "I just want to know if some of you haven't seen a monkey. He's the same size as me, he has a tail, wears a cap and red shirts.

"Are you hungry, little one?" another of the humans in the group asked, apparently ignoring what Dixie had just explained.

"What? No! A monkey!" Dixie replied. "Haven't you seen him?"

"Oh, don't worry, you must be lost," added another, still not hearing what Dixie was saying. "But we can help you in some way."

"No, I ask if you haven't seen a monkey around here!" Dixie exclaimed, losing her patience.

"It's so adorable!"

"Look, and she has nice hair."

"And why is she carrying a backpack?"

"How about we adopt her?"

Apparently, people weren't listening to what Dixie was saying. She tried a few more times to talk to them, but still got no answers. These people just kept flattering her, taking her hair, and talking to her sweetly as if she was a pet or a helpless creature.

"*The monkey!*" Dixie exclaimed, raising her voice to the point of frightening that group of people as well. Then, they began to move away from her little by little, and they also began to show a terrified face. "Oh, no, no, why do you look at me like that? Just tell me if you haven't seen another monkey, aren't you listening to me?"

"Uhh... Does anyone know how to understand primates? Because I don't," one of the confused people commented.

Dixie had finally understood the situation: *they didn't understand her language*, and now she didn't know what else she could do... Suddenly, at that moment, she remembered that she also brought something that could be useful. She rummaged through her backpack and extracted nothing more and nothing less than Diddy's photo, the same one that was broken; with that, she could indicate what she wanted to tell them, so she showed it to the group of people.

"Wait! I think I know what she wants to tell us," one of the people exclaimed. "Are you looking for that monkey in the photo, little one?"

Dixie nodded immediately, relieved that they had finally understood what she was trying to explain to them.

"I haven't seen any monkeys like that, little one."

"Me neither, there aren't even monkeys around here. It's even strange that you're here."

The rest of the people began to answer almost the same. That disappointed Dixie a lot and began to worry her a lot more. Now she didn't know where to search for Diddy, she looked at his picture again and was saddened, wondering with all the uncertainty if she would see him again.

"I think I have seen that monkey!" said someone else behind the group, catching the attention, especially from Dixie. It was a human child who came in a group with two other children.

"Really? And where could a monkey like that be?" one of the people asked those children.

The boy went to Dixie to get a better look at the photo she was carrying, looked at it carefully, and showed a shocked face.

"That I think is the new monkey I saw yesterday at the zoo '*Zoovlaki*'!" replied the boy, very astonished. "He wears those same red clothes."

"That monkey is great, he juggles and does other amazing jumps," commented another of the children cheerfully.

Dixie changed her face immediately and felt a little air of hope; what they were telling her were clear references to Diddy... But in a *zoo*? What could he be doing over there? Dixie, as best she could, began beckoning people about how she could get there.

"What are you saying? The... zoo?"

"Are you looking for your little friend, the monkey, and you want to go to the zoo?" one of the human children asked.

Dixie nodded, relieved that she was understood and expecting concrete answers.

"But that's difficult, they're not going to let any animal out of there," commented one of the adults.

"Or are you also from the zoo 'Zoovlaki' and you got lost, little one?" another of the people asked her.

Dixie wanted to say no, but decided to give them an affirmative answer so that she would have a better chance of being given directions on how to get there.

"Well, that's a bit far from here, but we'll take you to the police officers so that-"

Instantly, Dixie desperately shook her head; she would have to arrive herself if she wanted to find out better where Diddy was.

"You can't go there alone, they'll catch you anyway," replied one of the children.

Suddenly, between the beach and the street, it began to fill with a big crowd of people, and they were not alone, several vehicles with red and blue lights had also arrived... They were police officers who had apparently been contacted by people because of Dixie's presence.

"Oh, no! Come this way," whispered one of the children who, along with his group, took Dixie to a hiding place so she wouldn't be seen by the police. "The 'Zoovlaki' is at-"

"Is it serious? She can't just go on her own," interrupted another of the children.

"That doesn't matter, haven't you heard that primates are cunning and very agile?" the other child replied, before speaking to Dixie again. "Look, monkey, get on one of the buildings, you must be good at climbing, and from up there you'll surely see the zoo. It has a big sign with green letters that say 'Zoovlaki', and at the bottom of the zoo, you can see an orange building. Did you understand me?"

Dixie tried to process the information the child was telling her until she fully understood it, and then nodded.

"Well, now go quickly before the police arrive and catch you," said one of the children.

"And hide well, try not to let anyone see you. Good luck, little one!"

After all that, Dixie left for the city, but not before saying goodbye to the children with her hand in gratitude. She thought that if there were people who were that kind, maybe Diddy wasn't having such a hard time and wasn't in serious danger... She even thought that Diddy might just have been lost and some people would have him to try to help him.

She ran stealthily out of the beach until reach the city. On the sidewalks there were some trees to which she climbed and hid. She observed the city and analyzed how she could climb one of the buildings; she had always climbed trees but never a building. Besides, there was a large road on which vehicles passed at full speed.

At one point, the vehicles came to a complete stop, so it was the opportunity for Dixie. She made sure that no one was nearby and got out of the tree, then ran into the street and hid under one of the vehicles. There was a large traffic of vehicles planted on the road, so it could be a good mobilization route for her. She passed stealth and quickly under each of the vehicles, trying not to be seen by anyone. She was coming to the next sidewalk, when suddenly, the vehicles started again.

Dixie, without reaching the sidewalk, had to lie on the ground and stand still, with enormous tension as she saw how each vehicle passed over her, and had to stay in the center to avoid being run over. A while later, vehicles stopped passing, and the road was empty. Dixie was in the middle of it and at risk of being discovered, so without further thought, she ran to the sidewalk.

Not knowing where to go now, Dixie ran into a very narrow alley between two buildings that were in front. A few people saw her passing by and were alerted, but Dixie completely ignored them. She looked up and saw how tall the building was; she remembered that the children on the beach had told her to climb to the top of one to observe where the zoo was... "*Zoovlaki*". The building had windows and a few elements to hold onto, so Dixie managed to get up. She began to climb the building holding on to window sills and trying to jump as high as she could to reach more supports such as window bars, windowsills, cracks, or exterior ornaments that would serve her to climb. Apparently, it was not so difficult for her.

Minutes later, she reached the top of the building. She was a little exhausted but at least she had made it. She looked up again and realized that... the building where she stood was not as tall as she thought. In fact, the other buildings on the sides were taller and blocked the view of the city. Dixie was frustrated but she wasn't going to give up either, so she jumped down the building about all the window ledges and, trying not to let anyone see her, began to climb the building next door in the same way. That other building was a little more complicated since it was much taller, but fortunately, Dixie didn't usually fear heights.

She reached the top of the building and now she was tired, but from that height she could see the city better. Dixie paused for a while to observe, and smiled for a moment at the sight she was perceiving; she never imagined being able to contemplate a big city from that height with her own eyes. From there, she could see the houses, the buildings, the streets with cars walking, the crowds of people and many more things that she had never seen before. Curiosity invaded her and she really wanted to go through everything, even though she wasn't so well received by people. But knowing new places only reminded her... of Diddy; she wished he was there too and remembered that she must find him, so she focused again. She began searching in detail around the city for a zoo as described by those human children.

"*AAAHHH! AN ANIMAL!*" shouted a man who had got up with two other people, to the top of the building, by means of an elevator.

"I'll take care of it!" exclaimed another of the people running towards Dixie to catch her.

Dixie panicked not knowing where to escape now. She was going to come down from the building, but looking down, it was too high. A few meters away, there was another building, which was a few centimeters higher. Dixie, unable to think about for long, plucked up the courage and ran in the direction of the building next door. When she reached the edge of the building where she was, she jumped with all the strength she had, using her hair in time to gain distance, and with that she managed to reach the top of the other building. Putting her feet on the other building, she turned to look at the people, who had been paralyzed by Dixie's bold move, especially because of her hair.

Dixie, seeing that she was able to make that jump, smiled and was filled with much more energy. She began to jump from building to building, performing the same movement with her hair; she found it fun and risky at the same time. At one point, she stopped to continue observing where such a zoo was; she had to locate a big sign with green letters that said "*Zoovlaki*" and with an orange building, as she had been told. She looked at every detail of the city, but found nothing similar to what was mentioned. She was starting to get frustrated and was questioning again if it had been a

good idea to get there; she didn't want to think either that Diddy wasn't actually in that city and the whole trip would have been in vain.

Suddenly, she caught sight of something on the road under the building where she was, which immediately attracted her attention: it was a large vehicle carrying what appeared to be a cage and, inside it, there were... animals? Dixie was astonished at that, but much more at what she saw later: at the top of the cage there was a sign, she narrowed her eyes and was shocked to see that it said nothing more than "*Zoovlaki*". Dixie was immediately thrilled and knew that this might be her chance to make it to that zoo. The vehicle was planted, so she started getting out of the building as fast as she could. But things got complicated when the vehicle started up again and Dixie was halfway up the building. Unable to think at that moment, she began to jump towards the windowsills of the buildings next door in a descending manner and, from a window at medium height, jumped in the direction of the vehicle; she almost didn't get there, but her hair helped her gain distance. Finally, she managed to land in the vehicle, grabbed hold of the bars of the cage and climbed to the top. Now, she was hoping could make it to that zoo.

"Hello?"

Dixie got scared when someone spoke to her, but then realized it came from the same cage... They were giraffes, which was very strange to her, because she couldn't imagine finding other animals in the middle of the city.

"Uhh, hello... Hey, do you go to the zoo... *Zoovlaki*?" Dixie asked them with some shyness.

"We live there," replied one of the giraffes, although to tell the truth, they were in low spirits. "And who are you, little ape? And what are you doing around here?"

"I'm Dixie and... I was searching for a friend who is supposedly in that zoo. What's it like over there?"

"What can I tell you, it's a very ordinary and boring life," replied another giraffe without any expression. "People go to see us every day, take pictures, feed us and that's all."

"And haven't you seen a monkey there wearing red clothes?"

"We don't even know much about the other animals there."

Dixie looked at them strangely; those giraffes might not have been as charismatic as they appeared, and the strangest thing was that they said their life was very *ordinary*. Still, they didn't seem to describe the place as dangerous, which reassured Dixie a bit.

The vehicle continued to drive. With giraffes in company, Dixie could keep a low profile to people.

Several minutes after so much mobilization, Dixie opened her eyes with amazement and excitement to see what she was looking for so much in the city: in front there was a huge sign that said "*Zoovlaki*" with green letters, in addition of two statues of elephants at the ends; now she was in the place she had been told. The vehicle then began to park near the sidewalk.

"Hey, monkey girl or whatever you are," said one of the giraffes. "If you are not from this zoo, you better hide or those men will catch you."

Suddenly, some men got out of the vehicle and were heading towards the cage. Dixie, hearing the suggestion of the giraffes, immediately left and jumped into one of the walls of the zoo enclosure, climbed to the top and hid among one of the statues that were there.

From there, she had a view of the zoo. She had never seen one, in fact... she didn't even know exactly what they looked like, she just knew that there were animals. She could observe several corners, each different from others and, of course, there were several animals of different species: birds, mammals and reptiles, all in one place. There were also a lot of people walking around to observe them and take a few pictures of them. It seemed like a nice place, and it was as if animals had their own home in the middle of a big city. What Dixie didn't understand was how people weren't afraid of animals in that place. Until she realized another detail: all the animals were *locked up*, with no way out; they were all behind bars or inside glass walls... That was a bit strange to Dixie.

After so much observation, Dixie returned to what she was going to do: *search for Diddy*. But she didn't know how to start, as there was a crowd of people present; if she went out, she would surely scare them away. But since there were animals, she thought she might go a little unnoticed. At the entrance there were only people selling sweets and balloons, so she went down with caution and began to walk stealthily near the walls and hiding behind some small plants. To be able to fully enter the zoo there was a ticket office, where there were only a few bars that went up and down. She waited a couple of minutes for the exact moment, which no one was seeing, and went through the entrance under the bars without problems. Now, she was inside the zoo.

"Look, a loose little monkey!" announced a human child astonished to see Dixie and who was almost attracting the attention of everyone present.

Dixie panicked and, out of survival instinct, she ran out in a hurry. There were some trees nearby, which she immediately climbed up and started jumping one by one until she got far enough away from people. Arriving at the last tree, there were no more people, so she went down smoothly. There was only a lawn, trees and a small lake nearby; it looked like a small jungle space.

"Huh! Who are you?" said a voice that suddenly scared Dixie, so she turned to look at who it belonged to. "The primate area is in the background."

It was a group of tall ostriches that were in the same place. Dixie, upon closer observation, realized that she was in one of the zoo's latticed spaces.

"Uh... I'm just searching for a friend. I'd been told that he'd been seen around here," Dixie replied with a forced smile. "He's a monkey of my same stature."

"As I told you, the primate area is in the background. There are no monkeys around here," the ostrich added, pointing his head toward the bottom of the zoo. "By the way, it's not good that you walk around here; you might be captured."

"And... How do I get to that primate area?" asked Dixie.

"You're not from here, are you?" another ostrich questioned, who then lowered his head to the ground in front of Dixie. "Hop on and I'll show you an alternative."

Dixie agreed and climbed on the back of the ostrich and then to his head. There she already had a better view.

"Do you see that sign with drawings of monkeys? It's over there. You can go through those walls, no one will suspect you there," he pointed to some walls that were towards the side walls of all the animal corners. "Just be careful not to fall."

"Okay. Thank you!" Dixie replied, smiling at them.

Subsequently, Dixie jumped towards one of the walls that was in the next place and, cautiously, was walking through each of them. Those walls were very narrow, but she made the effort not to fall and to be able to reach where the primates that the ostriches had indicated to her were. As she passed through each of the sites, several animals noticed her and looked at her as if she were an intruder; among them, there were zebras, rhinos, hippos, tigers, birds, among others, although to tell the truth, they all had an expression of boredom and without grace.

Eventually, Dixie made it to the primate zone. There were some of the same species, as well as gorillas, monkeys, orangutans, baboons, mandrills, which for a moment reminded her of the Kong family. With great caution, she climbed down to the ground and infiltrated the site.

"Who are you?!" a big gorilla exclaimed, looking at Dixie strangely. Suddenly, a bunch of apes began to crowd towards her.

"Uhh... H-Hello, is that... I wanted to ask if a monkey wasn't around here," Dixie replied with some nerves.

"Are you new here?" a baboon ape asked her, still looking at her strangely.

"No, I'm not from here. I just came to find a friend... He's a monkey, has a tail and wears a cap and red shirts with yellow stars."

The other apes immediately changed their hard gaze to one of complete amazement, as they all looked at each other quickly.

"Isn't it... the *new* one?" one of the apes asked the others.

"The one called... *Diddy*?" added another.

Dixie instantly opened her eyes as wide as she could and was thrilled to hear that; she felt as if the universe was in her luck after so much travel.

"*Yeah!* That's how he's called! *It's him! It's him!*" Dixie said with enormous emotion and taking small leaps. Suddenly, the others smiled instantly as if they knew him too.

"Ahh, that little monkey!" the gorilla commented cheerfully. "Yeah, he arrived two days ago, he was very scared at first but then we cheered him up a bit. He is a nice monkey."

"Is he your brother?" asked another of the apes.

"No, he's just my friend," Dixie replied with a small smile. "Well, and where is he?"

"Well, the monkey Diddy showed the people of the zoo that he knows how to do incredible acrobatics, and that's why they have taken him to another area here. We've heard people passing by talking about him. In fact, I think he's performing now."

"What? Just now?!" Dixie exclaimed, astonished. "Where exactly is he?!"

"I guess on the other side of the zoo; some animals do a lot of shows there and people like it," said one of the apes on the other side of one of the walls. "Go up there and see if you find him."

"And wait, little girl! If you came looking for him, then you came from the jungle or something?" another ape, astonished, asked.

"Yes, from an island," Dixie replied quickly, before leaving. "Well, excuse me, but I have to go. Thanks for the information!"

The apes said goodbye to Dixie and, immediately, she climbed some trees and then crossed the wall that was on the sides. Indeed, on the other side was another area of the zoo: there were no more corners with animals, only a semi-wooded area with a path that led to another esplanade and, as Dixie had been informed before, an orange building was in sight in the background.

There were a lot of people walking, so Dixie had to land on the ground with stealth. There were also a few trees and several plants that served as a hiding place. In the background, there was a big crowd of people, which caught her attention, so she headed there. Further on, there was a lake that had to cross it through a bridge. Dixie had no more plants to hide in there, so she had to go through the lake which luckily was nothing deep.

Arriving on the other side, she could better observe what the crowd of people was about: there was a huge cage with a high pedestal in the center. Apparently, it was a spectacle, and people were in front of it. But suddenly... Dixie felt her heart begin to race to the maximum at what she saw: *Diddy!* She opened her eyes as wide as she could and a huge smile was drawn when she saw the monkey again; she couldn't even believe it, she begged it wasn't any hallucination of hers... Finally, *she had found him!* And by the way... he was not seen in serious danger as she had imagined when he disappeared.

Diddy was right on the pedestal. The whole crowd was watching him as if he were a celebrity, and apparently, Diddy was giving a show with the stunts he used to do. In addition to him, there were some hoops and ropes that were also part of the show of the little monkey. All the people were amazed and applauded with emotion at the show.

Dixie, without thinking any more, continued on her way and hid behind the plants as she headed in the direction of where Diddy was. She climbed on a tree that was as close as possible to observe him. She couldn't believe it; when Enguarde had said that Diddy was *kidnapped*, she thought his life would be at risk, but seeing him again, she noticed everything was normal as if nothing happened, in fact... he looked pretty well.

But as Dixie watched Diddy, the memory of *four days ago* invaded her mind instantly...

That day, Dixie was sitting on a rock waiting for Diddy to arrive. She carried in her hands a tiny box covered in pink glitter with a red ribbon and with a note inside. When suddenly...

"*You!*" Jemky appeared heading towards Dixie, apparently very angry. "I wanted to find you!"

"W-what are you doing here?!" Dixie exclaimed, getting up and defensive. "What do you want?!"

"Don't act crazy! That emerald you gave me was *fake!*" he replied furiously before extending his hand. "*We want the real emerald!*"

"Well, yeah! It was fake," Dixie replied with a shrug. "Did you really think I was going to hand it over to you?"

"Ah, yeah?! *So, this time you will hand it over to me!*" Jemky replied as he pulled a gun from his pockets to point it at Dixie.

Instantly, Dixie was startled and screamed as she covered her face and began to tremble in terror.

"Oh, are you afraid, girl? What a pity you can't defend yourself this time," Jemky said with an evil smile. "Now! I want that emerald!" he added, pointing her more closely. "Nobody makes fun of the four of us!"

"J-Jemky... I-I'll g-give you whatever you want, b-but please... d-don't hurt me," Dixie stammered, with all the fear she could have felt after seeing him in that form. "And... and I don't think I can give it to you now b-because I'm w-waiting for D-Diddy. In... In fact... there he comes."

Dixie, her arm shaking, pointed to Diddy, who wasn't coming that far from where they were. Jemky also observed him from a distance, and then smiled evilly.

"Well, I don't care! This is what you'll do with him then if he sees us!" he ordered, pointing the gun at her closely. "When that monkey arrives, you'll have to tell him that you won't go with him, pretend again that we're going on a date or something to make him leave and you'll tell him that you don't love him anymore, that you won't be his friend anymore, *stomp on him!* Make him feel bad!"

"B-But what are you talking about?! I can't do that to him!"

"If you don't, then he'll pay the consequences, and *I'll shoot him right then and there!*" he snapped, snatching the tiny box she was carrying and throwing it to the ground. "Now, *the better* you do, the more likely I'm to pity you two! And play along, by the way!" he added, smiling maliciously as Dixie trembled. "Now come!" he ordered, taking her arm to start walking quickly with her. "If he arrives and sees us, *you know what you have to tell him.*"

...

"Oh, hi, dwarf," Jemky said to Diddy with a sly smile when he arrived.

"Uh, h-hi, Diddy," Dixie said with a forced smile... trying to sound natural.

"*But...* And now what?" exclaimed Diddy, quite confused.

...

"*Ugh, okay, Dixie!*" Diddy replied from a distance after 'arguing' with Dixie. "Anyway, I didn't even want to go with you today!"

Without arguing any more, Diddy retreated from the area at an accelerated pace.

Meanwhile, Dixie and Jemky also went away from the site at accelerated steps and while he was holding Dixie's arm.

"He's already gone," Jemky whispered, looking at Diddy in the distance, before speaking to Dixie. "What a good performance, baby. That monkey was saved," he said, smiling and at the same time

looking at her seriously. “But now: hand us over what was *pending*... I want that emerald! And for having given us that fake emerald, I’ll now order you to bring me Diddy’s *complete pyramid*!” he added as he pulled the gun out of his vest again to point it at her. “And from here you don’t leave until you hand it over to us, okay?”

Dixie was just being invaded by all the guilt she could feel remembering it... That was what had actually happened. But at the same time, she knew she couldn’t lose the courage she took to find Diddy again, and she would have to go for him.

On the other hand, Diddy was not having a bad time; he really liked to do acrobatics, and being in front of a huge number of spectators, made him feel like a star, and this time without hateful classmates bothering him as in that celebration of him and Donkey after saving the banana reserve. When Diddy finished jumping through some hoops, he stood in the middle of the pedestal and greeted the whole crowd happily while they applauded him... But he stopped in his tracks when he looked at one of the trees nearby: a silhouette with pink beret and blond hair... was watching him... “*What?!*” he exclaimed in his mind.

After the millisecond of eye contact, Dixie immediately hid among the branches of the tree she was on. She wanted to see Diddy again, but at the same time, she was very embarrassed to meet him again because the last time they had seen each other, they were on such bad terms. But anyway, she had to go see him, so she came down from the tree and looked for a shortcut to get to him.

Diddy, on the other hand, thought it was just another of his thoughts and didn’t take it seriously, so he continued with his show without further ado. Subsequently, he jumped towards a rope that was suspended in the air, and began to juggle keeping with one foot and doing acrobatic jumps successively. He was very focused... until he saw again the Dixie’s silhouette moving under the trees. Instantly, he felt a turn in his heart and now he was well sure that it was her. He almost lost his balance on the rope, to which people murmured with concern. But Diddy didn’t want to lose focus, even though his maximum concentration was no longer the same.

For his last stunt, Diddy started jumping through several hoops while juggling, and he must have all concentration fixed. But when he reached the last hoop, he lost all his balance. Luckily, he held his tail in time and smiled at the audience to pretend. The reason for that imbalance was nothing more and nothing less because now, in front of his eyes... was Dixie looking straight at him. She was hiding behind the small wall that separated the huge cage from the crowd of people. Both kongs were now seeing each other in the distance. At the awkward moment, Dixie waved to him in the distance, smiling nervously. Diddy, on the other hand, was paralyzed, as he couldn’t believe what he was seeing; it wasn’t just a thought anymore: it was real Dixie!

Minutes later, the show ended and people began to disperse, all glad to have watched Diddy’s performance. Some took pictures of him and said goodbye from a distance, while he tried to stay as if nothing happened.

When there were already few people, Diddy disappeared for a few seconds, until he reappeared on the ground under the pedestal, to finish making sure that what he had seen was true and not a bad move of his thoughts. With a little insecurity, he moved much closer to the bars, while Dixie, with all the nerves at the top, also went towards him. Both of them looked at each other for a few seconds when they were already face to face and, at the same time, they didn’t know what to say at the moment.

"D-Dix-Dixie?... Really... is it *you*?" stammered Diddy, still not recovering from the shock.

"Uhh... h-hi, Diddy... Yes... it's me," Dixie replied, smiling nervously and also stuttering. She hoped the reunion would have been more emotional, but it was just being somewhat tense.

Diddy only took a breath before he could speak normally.

"But... how did you get here?" he asked her, very confused.

"Well... everyone on the island is searching for you. I found Enguarde and... he said you had been kidnapped, and some kids on the beach in this town told me you were here. I thought... that you were in danger and I came to... *rescue you*," she explained slowly and with a forced smile.

"Ah, there's nothing dangerous here as such," Diddy replied more calmly before pausing. "Well, I thought there was, but no. This place looks fun, the people here have been very kind to me... Although the other animals are a bit serious and unfriendly."

There was another awkward silence. Dixie then tried to talk to him as if nothing happened, as he was not seen at all in serious danger.

"I see... And by the way, you were great," Dixie said to break the ice after the quiet time. "I saw your whole presentation, you were amazing."

"Oh, thank you," Diddy replied in kind. "Do you know? The human people here told me that I'm a star monkey and that they'll give me many awards for the stunts in a few days," he added in the same tone of joy as if he were telling her something normally.

"Really? That sounds great... By the way, how did you get here? Were you captured or did you come on your own?"

"Well, a couple of days ago I went out at night for a ride around the sea, and suddenly there was a pretty strong wind that pushed me out to sea. I just had gone out because--"

Suddenly, Diddy's cheerful expression turned completely to one of disgust. He suddenly remembered the bad terms he had been left with Dixie, he remembered everything: from when she stood him up for dating Jemky, when she said those hurtful words of enmity, until when she shamelessly lied to the teacher about his pyramid. He didn't continue to say anything more, and just turned around in disgust.

"What's up?" Dixie asked with strangeness, until she guessed what Diddy was thinking. "Oh, no, no! Look, Diddy, I swear I didn't mean everything I told you and--"

"I don't talk to fake friends!" he interrupted coldly.

"Ugh! Those four fools from school were *armed* again as you had told me long ago!" Dixie exclaimed, getting to the point. "That's what happened!"

"What?!" Diddy immediately turned around upon hearing Dixie's statements. He was shocked for a moment as if at first, he didn't believe what she said.

"Yeah, I was going to tell you yesterday when we left school, but I couldn't find you anymore," Dixie replied earnestly before speaking quickly. "Those four have guns again. Jemky threatened me so that I would tell you that I was dating him and that I didn't want to be your friend anymore, and

so that I wouldn't tell Mr. Pinky that the pyramid was yours, or that else, they wouldn't mind attacking you, Mr. Pinky, the whole class, or whoever was present. That's what really happened!"

Diddy froze for a while when he heard that; he was very confused by what Dixie was saying. But suddenly, those fears for his four annoying classmates were reappearing after a long time.

"Are you... saying all that seriously, Dixie?" he asked her seriously.

"Yes, Diddy... And forgive me, I didn't want to hurt you that way," Dixie said, looking down sadly.

Diddy still looked at her strangely as he processed what she had just told him.

"Uhh, okay, Dixie... I can forgive you, but-"

"Come here, little monkey!"

Suddenly, two human men appeared in the cage. One of them caught Diddy by surprise, while the other man opened a small cage where they pushed him inside.

"*Diddy!*" Dixie exclaimed, frightened.

"*W-what?!*" Diddy exclaimed.

"Hey! That chimpanzee ran away!" said one of the men when he also saw Dixie.

Immediately, Dixie hid in a shortcut she had come for. From there, she looked as Diddy was being taken out of the huge cage and in the direction of the orange building. She was very confused and, because of the way they took Diddy, she began to suspect that maybe that place was not as quiet as she thought for a moment.

Without staying still, Dixie went out to follow in the footsteps of the men taking Diddy away. She ran stealthily down the short way that remained, but unfortunately, the men entered the building and closed the door instantly...

Chapter 23: Welcome to the Circus

While she had nowhere to go, Dixie was walking around that orange building, trying to find some alternative entrance to it, and making sure that no one saw her.

Later, she climbed up to some high windows to search above, until she heard a distant voice that sounded just like Diddy's.

"Hey, but why are you leaving me locked up here?... Wait! Don't leave!" Diddy could be heard exclaiming in despair.

Dixie peeked out of a high window and, indeed, Diddy was there. What she could see inside was a huge room with a bunch of fairly tidy rolling cages, where Diddy was locked in one of them. He was struggling with the cage, trying to open it without success. Dixie was beginning to stop seeing the pleasant atmosphere she witnessed when she arrived at the zoo. She opened the small window and entered the room through it, and immediately went to where Diddy was.

"Diddy!" she called him as she headed towards him.

"Dixie? Are you a secret agent or what?" Diddy joked, surprised to see how Dixie could find him wherever he was taken. "Hey, I don't understand, those men told me they had a surprise for me, but I didn't know I should stay locked up here," he complained.

"Wait, I'll get you out of here," Dixie said, trying to open Diddy's cage, but when she realized, it was really locked and a key would be needed to open it. "Oh, no... This doesn't open."

"Oh, or don't worry about it now," Diddy said, showing fear behind bars. "First explain to me well how it's that those four fools had guns again!"

"Oh, yes, those four psychopaths were carrying guns again!" Dixie explained in the same way. "And the last time when I was going to go with you to the waterfalls, shortly before you arrived, Jemky appeared and threatened me, told me to tell you all that and to give him your pyramid with the emerald, and not to tell anything or they would attack everyone," Dixie summed up desperately before calming down. "That's what happened!"

Diddy was only completely shocked by what she said and now had no doubt if he had heard it right.

"Oh, no!" Diddy started to worry a lot more. He thought that those four evil children wouldn't bother like that anymore, but after hearing that from Dixie, he was afraid of them again as he did quite some time ago. "Oh, no..."

"And yes, Diddy... I took your pyramid; Jemky and those fools threatened me. Really, I'm sorry," Dixie added with a lowered gaze, which surprised Diddy.

"W-what?... Oh, I should have guessed," Diddy said, slapping his face lightly. "Oh... we'll fix it. We have to return to DK Island! But are the other kongs all okay?" he asked her desperately.

"Yes... As far as I knew, yes. By the way, I thought that those fools would have done something to you and that is why you had disappeared," she added in a tone of utmost concern.

"No, I haven't seen them. The night I left, I had gone out because-" upon remembering it, Diddy was a little embarrassed to admit to Dixie that he felt bad for her.

"Because... you were very affected by what I told you, and besides you were failed in school, right?" Dixie continued as if reading his expression.

Diddy just looked away before continuing to tell how he got there.

"Well... Yes, that. And as I told you before, there was a torrential wind and I was swept out to sea, and suddenly three human men appeared, I felt that something was shot at me and suddenly I woke up here in a corner with other apes, although I didn't see that it was such a bad place, at least at first. Then, those gentlemen knew about my acrobatics and told me that I would serve to give shows and that in a few days they would return me to DK Island. But... I don't understand why I should also be behind bars," Diddy explained, confused and shaking the cage door. "Now tell me how you managed to find me."

Dixie told him the whole journey, from when he disappeared, when Enguarde informed him of his last appearance, to when she arrived in the city and had to cross several buildings and ensure that no one found her. Diddy's thoughts regarding the terms he was on with Dixie were also changing.

"Wow... you went through all that yourself," Diddy said in amazement, before waving the bars again, "Ugh, and those four fools again! So, they are the ones who have been behind this."

"Yeah, and I don't know what they're planning right now," Dixie replied worriedly.

"And by the way, Dixie... the first day we were going to go to the waterfalls, was that where Jemky started threatening you?"

"Yes, that's where it all started," Dixie replied before pausing. "Well, you'll see... It started that day after school, in fact; he tried to trade that emerald again in exchange for more jewels for us, but I told him again that I wouldn't accept. And then, when we were going to the waterfalls, he appeared before you arrived and then he forced me to tell you that we would go on a date at that time to make you leave, and after that he told me that he wanted the emerald."

"What?! And what happened next at that time? What did you do?"

"Obviously I wasn't going to hand it over to him, and then... I made him a fake emerald with any stone in a while that he let me go, and I even gave it to him in a box before I left; he wanted it for that very day. But the second time I was going to go with you to the waterfalls, he reappeared because he realized that the emerald I gave him was fake, and that's why he then forced me along with the other three fools to steal your entire pyramid."

"What?! So, it all started with... *that emerald*?" Diddy exclaimed in shock. "And what did those idiots want it for?... And why didn't you tell me anything the next day we met with the others outside your house?"

"Oh, well... I was afraid to tell you, Diddy," Dixie said, fearful. "They told me not to tell anyone and that no one will face them, or else they would hurt you as soon as they saw you... Now I see how you didn't have the courage to report those fools when they threaten you like this either; it's really horrible."

"And you didn't tell anyone about those four idiots, did you?" Diddy asked worriedly.

Dixie was silent when Diddy asked her that; she remembered that she had *already* told everyone about his history with the quartet of bully boys. Dixie had promised Diddy all along that she would keep that secret, but... now it wasn't secret anymore. She felt bad that she hadn't kept Diddy's secret, but she couldn't do anything else at the time; it was an emerging situation.

"Uhh... no, I didn't tell anyone that," Dixie replied lying and with a forced smile, but deep down she only felt worse.

"Oh, good thing," Diddy said with relief. "If they find out, I don't want to imagine all the conflict that could be created. The truth is that these four fools are insane, and I wouldn't like to know if they would be able to do something if they are ratted out or faced."

"Uh, hey, right, I don't know about you, but... now I feel bad vibes in this place," Dixie speculated, frowning and trying to change the topic.

"You're right... Starting with the fact that I must be inside a cage and out there no animal can get out," added Diddy, who was also beginning to suspect something wrong in that place.

"You two are right," suddenly said a voice that belonged neither to Diddy nor to Dixie.

Both kongs were scared and began to look everywhere where that voice, which sounded somewhat deep, had come from.

"Down here!"

As they looked at the other cages in the room, they realized they were not alone... There were several more animals of different species, also locked in each of the cages. Diddy and Dixie were surprised to see that Diddy wasn't the only one locked up there, as there were a lot of animals in the same situation. That was already very worrying... not to mention the mood in which the animals were; they didn't seem to have a drop of joy... Rather, they all looked depressed, some even looking like they had returned from the dead.

"Are you new here?" an elephant in a serious voice asked the two of them. This one had a rather injured ear and a weak look.

Diddy and Dixie were shocked to see the animal in that state, and that increased their concern much more.

"Uhh... yes, I suppose," Diddy replied in confusion. "Well, just me, she's visiting, so to speak," he added, pointing to Dixie.

"Oh, little monkeys!" a rhino said in a tone of resignation. "If you have fallen on this place, there is no turning back. Everything here is agony" suddenly, he revealed his wounded back. Diddy and Dixie made a gesture of horror upon seeing that.

"Welcome to your last days of life," added a little bear who, when he peeked through the bars, showed his eye greatly injured.

"In a few days I'll surely die," said a lion without looking up. He was discouraged, lying on the ground and with his back severely injured.

The other animals began to comment on similar things. Diddy and Dixie became increasingly horrified as they saw each animal in agony and in absent spirits. When they had entered the zoo, they perceived a pleasant atmosphere... But in that section where they were now, it was like another world, very contrary to how they thought it. There was a couple dozen animals, including elephants, tigers, lions, zebras, apes, rhinos and a few small bears.

"But... What happened to all of you?" Diddy asked them, all confused.

All the other animals looked up at Diddy, it was a look of total agony and as if they had no desire to live.

"Nothing," replied a zebra coldly. "That's how we live."

"What? What do you mean that this is how you live?" Dixie asked them, still not understanding.

"Don't ask."

Diddy and Dixie were much more confused; Those animals had no intention of even answering their questions.

"Well, but-"

Suddenly, the door of the huge room began to sound as if keys were inserted. When it opened, a human figure was appearing on the scene. Dixie looked for where to hide immediately.

A man dressed in a suit bearing the zoo's logo had entered, and brought behind him a wagon containing piles of what appeared to be animal food. All the caged animals began to raise their heads seeing that their lunch break had arrived, in fact, they looked very desperate to eat.

The man, with the help of a huge pallet, picked up each piece of food and began to throw them into each of the cages, including Diddy. A gorilla that was near the food cart tried to reach more of it by extending his hand completely, but suddenly, the man took out a whip with which he whipped the gorilla's cage, immediately scaring him away.

After that, the man walked out the door and then closed and secured it. Meanwhile, all the animals began to taste their lunch, although to tell the truth, they didn't seem to enjoy it; it was as if they only ate out of necessity.

"Oh, no, this food is disgusting!" Diddy exclaimed with disgust as he tasted the food. Dixie got out of hiding and returned to where Diddy was, who showed her the food. "Do you want to try a little? It's very bad."

Dixie agreed and tasted that food... Instantly, she also felt an unpleasant taste when she tasted it; All in all, it was a lousy quality meal.

"Do you eat this?" Dixie asked the other animals with a gesture of revulsion.

"It's what we have to eat," the animals replied as if nothing had happened.

The taste of that food was so unpleasant that Diddy couldn't stand it anymore and preferred to remain hungry.

"The food we were fed outside at the zoo was better," Diddy commented with disgust.

"Wait!" Dixie said before rummaging through her backpack, from which she extracted some bananas from DK Island. "Take it, I brought a few just in case."

"Great!" Diddy exclaimed, smiling and excited to see some bananas. "Good thing you brought them, Dixie. Thank you!"

Both began to taste the delicious bananas of the island reserve. Suddenly, seeing the poor condition of the other animals present, Dixie decided to give them a few bananas, too.

"Hey, do you want some?" she told them, going down to the ground and offering them the bananas.

"We don't eat bananas," replied a rhino.

"But try them, they're better than that food."

Immediately, Dixie began distributing bananas to each of the animals through their cages. Many animals hesitated to eat them, but the instant they tasted them, their faces immediately changed; for a moment, everyone could show a smile on themselves.

"This... is of good *quality*," commented one of the gorillas as he ate. Afterwards, everyone began to say similar comments.

"This is food."

"They are exquisite!"

"I told you so," Dixie added, smiling at them.

"Hey, monkey girl or chimpanzee or whatever... and why aren't you in a cage?" an elephant asked, apparently regaining some energy to speak.

"I had only come to rescue him," Dixie replied, pointing to Diddy.

"Well, '*rescuing him*' would be the right term, did you know?" added a gorilla in the same way. "If he's new here, he should know he'll be on his way... of *dying*."

"*What?!*" Diddy exclaimed, instantly shocking himself along with Dixie upon hearing that. "But what do you mean?"

The animals, with just a little more mood, seemed to speak more forcefully to the two of them.

"Well, little monkeys, this place is not great at all as many think. We are the circus animals, and some days we give shows in front of a lot of people. Yes, it's something that may sound fun but... it's quite the opposite."

"Wait, wait, wait!" interrupted Diddy after hearing what they were saying. "Did you say... *circus*?"

"Yes, that's right," replied one of the animals.

Diddy was paralyzed when he heard that, because the word "circus" only got on him the nerves of a thousand, since he knew well that it would not mean anything good. The animals only continued to speak normally:

"Some of us here, we were just from the zoo out there, but then we were passed here. Every so often happen that: new animals arrive... Others leave."

"Or we have also been bought from other circuses and zoos in other cities. I was from another circus, but they treated us much better there."

"The animals out there get very bored and want to be in the circus because they think it's fun, but they don't know anything about what it's really like, they don't know the *training*."

"Our tamers treat us like slaves, literally. They want us to do all the stunts they say perfectly, or else they whip us!"

"They don't feed us well."

"As punishment, they beat us or sometimes leave us without food!"

"They don't let us go outside, we just spend inside cages, and we only get out to training and functions."

"Oh, and woe to the one who stands against or attacks them because... they'll exterminate him!"

"And if you're not good enough to be in the circus either, they also exterminate you!"

"And when you stop being useful to do tricks in the circus, they also exterminate you!"

"Even, if the zoo animals don't turn out to be good at becoming part of the circus, they also exterminate them!"

"In fact, a few days ago they just killed one of us. Last week too, and who knows if in the coming days it'll be repeated."

"Some of us would even prefer never to have existed."

"By the way, today is that Annual Circus Festival and blah blah. It's terrible!"

"And another thing: do you know why this zoo is called '*Zoovlaki*'? It's because the owners of this place like to eat a dish named so, they eat it almost *every* day. And it's not known if it'll be true, but... out there we have heard rumors that they prepare it with the animals they exterminate every time, and that they even sell them!"

Diddy and Dixie were paralyzed by everything the animals said. The atmosphere of the place had become completely dark; both were present in what might be called a *prison*. That stage where they were, brought back memories to Dixie; for a moment, she remembered when she and her family had been enslaved by the group of mandrills and orangutans and, likewise, she remembered when she lived in the circus during her first years of life, although she didn't remember that life in the circus was as those animals described it. On the other hand, Diddy remembered an old story Cranky had told him about his younger days.

"Uh, Dixie, do you remember that Cranky's story, the circus story?"

"The one when he stole the girlfriend of the mustachioed plumber in revenge?"

"The same. Cranky said that in the circus he was in, the tamers were super bad," Diddy added, beginning to fear for his life. "They were almost the same as how these animals describe them in terms of whipping and being locked up. Although... the gentlemen who brought me here told me that in a few days they'll return me to DK Island."

"Uhh, by the way, monkey boy," an elephant interrupted Diddy. "That's *what* they tell us all, that in a few days they'll release us, and just look how we are."

Diddy and Dixie looked at each other much more horrified to hear that.

"Oh, no!" exclaimed the two little kongs at the same time.

"We have to get out of here!"

Diddy began to shake the bars of the cage in desperation, but neither knew how to open it. That mentioned Cranky's story, was in the times of youth of the old kong, when he was a circus animal where he was mistreated and chained and, in revenge, he kidnapped the girlfriend of the plumber who trained him, who after that, locked him up and then he was rescued by his son, Donkey Kong Junior.

"But we don't have a key," Dixie complained as she tried to force open the cage as well.

Suddenly, the door of the room where they were, sounded again, so Dixie ran again to hide. Then, a group of several people began to enter, all wearing clothes of the same model: a white and green T-shirt with a large logo that said "Zoovlaki". Each of them went to the cages and tied levers to them, with which they pulled them to make them roll.

"It's rehearsal time, monkey," an elephant said to Diddy as if it were a routine. "Do what you're told or you'll be whipped, you already know."

"What?!" Diddy exclaimed just as one of the people grabbed him from his cage and began to move him as well.

People began to move the rolling cages in the direction of another door of the room, this one was much taller, so that big animals, such as elephants or giraffes, could pass.

Dixie, who was hiding, also came out behind the whole group of people and animals. She had to be too stealthy to move, as it was very risky to go like this.

When the walk ended, they arrived at another room that was more like an esplanade. This one was much larger than the previous room, and the floor was dirt. Inside there were plenty of objects suitable for a circus performance such as hoops, balls, trapezoids, ropes and bicycles. The group of people placed in one area all the cages with the animals inside, each one well ordered.

Dixie headed near where Diddy's cage was, but at the same time, she was trying to keep a low profile in front of people. Suddenly, Diddy looked at the front of the esplanade and saw three figures coming towards them.

"Hey, Dixie!" he whispered before pointing to those ones. "Those who come there are the ones who captured me and brought me to this place."

Three tall, thin, apparently middle-aged men entered the site. All three wore a set of short light brown clothes that also had a logo that read "Zoovlaki". They came bringing in their hands some dishes with food, which they were finishing tasting on the way. Even so, these three had a face of very few friends who, as soon as they entered the scene, began to frighten the entire herd of animals.

"Oh, no! Here we go again!" exclaimed one of the little bears, showing themselves terrified.

"Ugh, I hate those three idiots!" added a lion furiously.

"What?" Dixie exclaimed, confused by what they were saying.

"They are the tamers, little monkeys," replied a rhino.

The rest of the animals began to complain and be frightened, while Diddy and Dixie didn't know what to do and, at the same time, they were afraid to remember what they had been told about the circus, especially Diddy, since he was inside a cage like the rest of the animals.

"Hey... but those tamers... why do they *look like this*?" asked Dixie, shocked at certain particular characteristics brought by that trio of humans.

These three men didn't have a completely normal appearance; to begin with: one appeared to be one-eyed, as he wore an eye patch; another was one-armed and had one less forearm; while the last only had one full leg and the other was replaced in half by an orthopedic. But anyway, that didn't seem to be an obstacle for them, as they moved and moved like anyone else.

"Well, we'll give you a summary," said one of the caged gorillas, to Dixie's doubts. "According to what we have heard when they complain about their appearances: one of them, while they were at a function, a tiger attacked him and destroyed his eye... In fact, that wasn't long ago: the poor tiger just wanted to get free from this place, but in the end those three monsters ended up killing him. The other tamer, when they were going to capture a group of little bears, the family of those children tore off part of his arm."

"They managed to bring us here anyways," added one of the little bears, referring to themselves, along with two other bears present.

"And with the other tamer, when they tried to capture some little apes, they had an accident in their car and his leg was shattered. I guess that was longer ago, since at least us, we've always seen his leg like that."

"But on the one hand... they deserve it!" a lion added furiously. "What's more, they deserve to be more crippled than they already are!"

The group of three men walked to the cages and inspected them all, at the same time they finished chewing the food they had in their hands. Dixie immediately ran to hide behind some boxes that were nearby, and she didn't know why, but... suddenly she started remembering something... as if she *had ever seen* those three tamers in her life.

"Well, it looks like they all are," said the man with his eye patched up toward the people who had brought the animals. That group of people seemed to be assistants and employees of the zoo, who had to watch over all the animals.

"Will the new monkey also participate tonight?" asked the man with the prosthetic leg, pointing to Diddy.

"Yes, out there he proved to be very good; he shouldn't be hard to train," replied the one with the eye patch, before heading towards the other people. "Can you take these dishes with you, please?" he said, handing them the empty dishes they brought.

"Well, we'll start with the lions and tigers," added the man who had one less forearm as he pulled a bunch of keys from his pockets.

Then the crippled man on the arm went to the lion and the tiger cages and opened them with the keys. Meanwhile, the other two tamers prepared hoops, steps and balls for their tricks, each carrying a whip in their hands.

"Come, kittens, kittens," said one of the tamers in a playful tone to the felines, but with a touch of malice as he shook the whip.

There were three lions and two tigers that, showing their frightened faces and their ears back, walked in the direction of the tamers, as if they had no will of their own to try to escape.

"Today is the dress rehearsal and you better do it well," said the tamer with the eye patch, taking each of the felines by the ears. "*Now move!*" he ordered before whipping the whip against the ground and, with that signal, the felines immediately ran to their positions on the track.

The lions climbed onto platforms while the tigers were placed in the center and on the sides of hoops. One of the tamers again whipped the whip to the ground and, with that signal, the lions began to walk one after the other on the platforms and then jump through the hoops and on the tigers. Everything was fine at first... until the last lion had tripped over the hoop and fell to the ground.

"*Get up!*" ordered the tamer, heading towards the lion.

With just a little energy, the lion slowly headed back towards the platform... before receiving a strong lash from the tamer to hasten to continue with the act.

"*Get moving!*" the tamer shouted after whipping him.

After that, another of the tamers gave a signal to the tigers. They climbed into giant balls and had to keep their balance and then start rolling. Unfortunately, one of those felines fell and barely had time to climb back up... before the tamer whipped him hard as if he were an object.

"*Come on, get up, little cats! Up!*" ordered the tamer with authority and whip in hand.

The next trick was to have all the felines lined up on the platforms. Then, the three tamers pointed the whip at them, and they all stood on two legs instantly. Successively, the tamers gave them signals for the felines to stand, sit, jump or roll on the ground. Although it was the simplest trick, it was the one that felines feared the most, since due to stress and fatigue, they couldn't do everything quickly, which is why... they all earned a few *lashes without any mercy* that made them scream heartbreakingly... and so it happened again and again.

"That's what we meant, little monkeys," one of the caged animals said to Diddy and Dixie.

After so many lashes during the rehearsal, a lion was about to collapse and roared aggressively towards the three tamers, accompanied by some attempts of scratches that even scared the other animals away. Instantly, the tamers whipped him violently to calm him down.

"No roaring, little cat!" said the one-eyed tamer firmly, taking the animal roughly by the ear.

"What's wrong with these useless animals?!" complained the tamer of the prosthetic leg. "Today the functions begin and they all are lazy."

"Calm, just a few more lashes to wake them up and they'll do everything right. Or else, we leave them *without eating!*" replied the one-eyed man with an arrogant attitude.

"Well, I think it's time to change them, they're no longer working," added the less-than-forearm tamer. "There is a long list of zoo animals that can be used for the circus. Those here are already reaching the end of their useful cycle."

For the next trick, the other people who were present lowered some floating cages. The tamers gave the order with the whip to the felines, and all walked to the cages, none wanted to climb but the tamers gave lashes to each one, so they had no choice. The floating cages began to rise and turn in a round. The height at which they were was not fun for the felines, who showed a clear expression of terror and kept their ears back.

"Well, this one isn't going so badly," said the one-eyed tamer as they watched the floating cages with the animals inside them.

On the other hand, the rest of the animals only waited for their training turn, which kept them tense and thinking about the lashes they would get if they didn't do things right. Meanwhile, Diddy was beginning to feel chills; at first, he thought participating like this would be fun, but remembering what the animals there told them, along with Cranky's story, and added to the trainings he was watching now, he was only thinking about returning home; he was guiltily regretting going for a ride in the sea three nights ago.

It was long hours of training, where then it was the turn of the bears. The scenes were very similar in the field of training: the tamers gave almost all the orders with the whips and had no mercy for those who didn't do things well, they didn't even care that those bears were just little ones. These were put to roll in balls and ride bicycles, they were also ordered to stand on their hands, while others had to hold on to ropes and swing.

"Accelerate faster!" one of the tamers ordered one of the bears after whipping him while he was riding his bicycle by force. "*Faster!*"

Successively, among zebras, rhinos, primates and giraffes, they made them train by force, since the only faces that those animals showed were of terror, anguish and fatigue. To tell the truth, the tricks were not so complicated, but enough to make them all suffer because of the blows they received from those three tamers, which made them scream in pain and cause them more injuries in addition to what they already had. The last to be trained were elephants; they were made to walk in circles throughout the area while being beaten with the whip to speed up the pace, followed by several stunts that included rolling on a giant ball, having to be very careful not to fall.

"Don't be lazy! *Run!*" the tamers forced the elephants in the midst of the lashes. "*Speed up, accelerate!*"

At the end of each training, the tamers gave each one a portion of food as a prize, although in truth, it was the same low-quality food they used to give them at lunch.

Dixie kept hidden behind the boxes all the time, watching in horror those grotesque scenes of training; she never imagined they would be that way. Not even when she lived in a circus, she remembered that animals were treated so badly; the atmosphere was very different from how she thought.

"They're all already," said the one-eyed tamer as he closed one of the animal cages as he finished training them. "But we still lack... *the new little monkey*."

Diddy immediately looked up with a whole face of horror as the tamer turned and walked towards him. He had a feeling that neither with the appearance of his evil classmates from school nor with the hard look of Mr. Pinky had he felt. He just wanted to disappear from there and return to DK Island.

"Come, little monkey, you're going to be a star," said the tamer in a malicious tone as he inserted the key to open his cage.

When the cage was fully open, Diddy acted on instinct and tried to run out of there to escape. But to bad luck, the tamer stepped on his tail hard and made him scream in pain, then took his arm while the other two tamers took him by the limbs and led him to the track.

"Hey! What do you think you're doing, little monkey?!" the one-eyed tamer exclaimed, holding him tightly and staring at him sternly.

On the other hand, Dixie was also scared to see how Diddy would be the next victim; she wanted to rescue him right then and there, but the three men looked bigger and stronger than even she was afraid of.

"First of all, we need a picture with the monkey," said the tamer, placing Diddy on a platform. "Gentlemen, the camera!"

Then, one of the circus employees carried a camera in hand and stood in front of them, while the three tamers positioned themselves around Diddy.

"Now, high-five, little monkey. And smile at the camera," whispered the one-eyed tamer, joining his hand with Diddy's and then being photographed by the person with the camera. Diddy only agreed to the gesture and forced a smile at the moment.

After that, training with Diddy was to begin. The three tamers held him while tying ropes in his hands.

"Hey, wait!" said one of the employees suddenly running towards them. "It's just... I don't think it's necessary to train the monkey that way; he already knows how to do tricks by nature."

"*What?* No, no, we need to teach them some tricks," replied the tamer with the patched eye.

"But don't hit him, he's a little monkey."

"And how else are we going to train him?" added the one with the prosthetic leg.

"At least let him show his skills on his own!" added another employee who was nearby.

The tamers looked at Diddy, not yet sure about skipping his training. Diddy's breathing was too fast; his survival instinct acted on him again and, without letting another second pass, he untied himself from the ropes and ran again to escape... Not before being whipped with a couple of lashes from the tamer, with which he shouted loudly and stopped.

"Where do you think you're going, naughty little monkey?!" the one-eyed tamer growled as he forcibly brought him back and treated him roughly.

Dixie, seeing how things were going, was also outraged and decided to act on it: she grabbed one of the stones that was on the ground and, immediately, threw it at the tamers, falling right into the patched eye of one of them.

"Ahhh, my cursed eye!... that I don't even have it anymore," the man shouted as he held his patch.

"Hey! Who threw that stone?!" asked the one with the prosthetic leg while looking at each of the employees, to which everyone there denied having done so. Everyone began to look everywhere to see who had thrown the stone.

"We didn't do it, Brand!" said the one-armed tamer to the one-eyed man, apparently calling him by name.

"Wait a minute!" said one of the employees, turning to look at a pile of boxes, the same ones where Dixie was hidden, and went there immediately.

Dixie, as soon as she noticed the person approaching, crawled across the floor to under the rolling cages, just before the employee moved the boxes.

"Oh, forget it, let's continue with the monkey," exclaimed the tamer of the patch, rubbing his one-eyed eye. "But whoever it was *is going to pay me*. Now, little monkey, show us what you can do," he ordered Diddy with a stern look.

The three tamers let go of Diddy and let him prove his tricks on his own. Diddy would have done them normally, but panic had taken hold of him, so all he did was head towards the track, do a few little tricks as an introduction... and then trick the tamers to end up straying and escaping again.

"Urgh, you stupid monkey, I thought you were useful!" exclaimed the tamer as the three began to run again after Diddy. *"Don't let him escape!"*

Employees locked all entrance doors, while Diddy tried to locate an exit. Diddy was running in a hurry, but he had no escape route and, unfortunately, the tamers managed to catch up with him later and gave him another couple of lashes that left him paralyzed and in pain. Then, they forcibly took him to the track again.

"Pass me the shotgun!" exclaimed the tamer of the patch while keeping Diddy imprisoned.

Suddenly, one of the employees proceeded to hand the tamers a shotgun. Such an object immediately made Diddy's hair stand on end, and also Dixie, who didn't want to think the worst.

"Now," said the tamer, blurting out Diddy and pointing the shotgun at him. He spoke to him in a threatening tone as he was held by the other two tamers. "If you try to escape again, *you won't see this world again, naughty little monkey.*"

Instantly, Diddy remembered when his classmates threatened him in the same way, although to tell the truth, this time he felt a greater terror. He only showed an expression of deep fear and felt even his teeth trembling.

"*Now move!*" ordered the tamer of the prosthetic leg throwing him towards the track. "The whole track is yours, show us what you can do!"

Diddy, frightened and with his nerves activated, went to the center of the track and began to do his stunts on the platforms. With a few small balls, he juggled as many positions as he could. He also used the hoops with which he threw the balls, and then caught them again. Likewise, he rolled on the giant balls using even his hands. To continue, he climbed the stairs to where the tightrope was where he walked without problems; he did it juggling and even head-on. The tamers were impressed, because it seemed that they had never put an animal using the tightrope. And, finally, Diddy used the trapezoids, with which he swayed to great heights as if they were vines of the jungle. In the end, he made a landing on a trampoline and then on the ground.

The three tamers were dumbfounded; apparently, they had never made an animal do all those tricks. They approached Diddy, this time showing him an amazed smile.

"It's... *unbelievable*," said the prosthetic leg tamer enthusiastically. "This monkey will please the public!"

"It's impressive!" exclaimed the one with the forearm less.

"You're a star, little monkey!" added the one with the patched eye, patting Diddy on the head. "You can shine for tonight!"

Diddy was flattered, but at the same time, he didn't stop feeling terror towards the tamers; he no longer saw them like when he met them, so he only smiled at them in a forced way while trembling and seeing that they carried their shotgun at their sides.

"Hey, it's already five o'clock!" commented the one-armed tamer, looking at a watch he was carrying. "We have to get the animals ready for function."

"Well, let's put the monkey away," said the one-eyed tamer before heading to Diddy. "We must hasten to get them all ready."

Then, they took Diddy back and led him to lock him in his cage again. He felt regret that he had not planned a better escape in the times he tried, even if now he was all frightened to find himself locked up again and unable to do anything else. In the same way was Dixie, who was sneaked under the cages and without any alternative at that time...

Chapter 24: A Performance... and a Revelation

In the evening hours, it seemed that the time had come to arrange the circus animals for that evening's performance, so the employees arrived with a lot of decorative accessories in their hands. The three tamers reopened each cage where the animals were. With the help of their employees, they bathed and cleaned them and then put their accessories such as: frames, jewelry, colorful costumes, bows, and even some of them were made up... in addition to putting colored patches to those who brought severe wounds to cover them. Diddy was dressed in red-striped suits with a blue bowtie and colorful hat, and had his face painted circus style. And no... he couldn't escape at that time either; the tamers carried their shotguns at their sides all the time and watched everything.

Suddenly, other employees arrived with three plates of food and handed them to the tamers. These dishes consisted of skewers of meat on a thin slice of bread as well as chips and vegetables, which could imply that it was the food that the animals had mentioned to Diddy and Dixie. The tamers proceeded to eat each of their dishes while still keeping an eye on the animals.

At the end, the people moved the caged animals again. This time, they took them out of the building and then took them to where the circus was, which was diagonal to it. It was still very early, so the stands around the track were empty, but the place inside was huge and very elegant that even gave an appearance of being a happy place.

Finally, they left all the cages with the animals behind the huge curtains. The site was half-lightened, and there they left the animals before starting with the performance. All the people left for the time being, leaving the animals alone until it was time for the act to begin.

"I hate this clown costume," complained a gorilla, who had been dressed in costumes of various colors.

"And don't even tell me about this stupid pink skirt," added a bear, who was wearing a ballerina's tutu.

"This painting is uncomfortable," added an elephant with a painted face and a pile of jewelry. "And these rings are annoying."

The rest of the animals murmured their complaints about their costumes, and only a few liked it.

Dixie, who had also been following them, had slipped under the curtains of the circus. Diddy, upon seeing her, turned on his back immediately because of the style he brought.

"Uh... Diddy?" Dixie called it.

Diddy turned to her, embarrassed that she would see him that way and earn her laughter. Dixie, as soon as she saw how Diddy had been dressed, could not contain herself and began to let out a few small laughs that almost turned into laughter.

"Don't make fun!" Diddy said, crossing his arms and frowning.

"It's that..." Dixie couldn't continue because of the laughter.

In the distance, she saw a small mirror, which she picked up and showed to Diddy. He opened his eyes intensely upon seeing his reflection and the style of face painting that had been done to him. Dixie just continued to laugh.

"What a horror!" Diddy exclaimed in disgust. "A little more and they leave me the same as Mandrew or Melenky."

"Hey, chimp girl," said a gorilla who was on the sides toward Dixie. "You'd better hide, I think people are coming."

Suddenly, footsteps began to be heard, accompanied by human murmurs behind the curtain. Dixie immediately went to hide behind the cages just before several people entered. The room where they were was the dressing rooms, since there were a lot of mirrors, costumes and accessories typical of a circus and, in addition, the people who had arrived had their faces made up and exuberant hairstyles.

"And who are they?" Dixie whispered to the animals.

"They're also circus stars," replied an elephant.

"And they are also trained by whips?" Diddy asked in confusion.

"No, they are trained *normally*."

"In fact, they do better tricks than ours," added one gorilla. "They should just participate, not us."

They waited a couple more hours. They only watched the human acrobats get ready for the performance in all their colorful and exotic costumes, while others rehearsed certain moves with which they would perform. It was a long time that, for the rest of the animals, was already normal, but for Diddy and Dixie it was very boring.

After a few long hours, a big crowd of human voices was gradually heard outside in the stands. Increasingly, the circus was filled with people and, at the same time, several lights were illuminating the stage.

Dixie sneaked under the cages until she reached the curtain and peeked stealthily to better look outside. A few minutes later, the three tamers entered the stage; they were dressed in elegant costumes typical of circus presenters. The one-eyed tamer had a microphone in hand, all set to go. Looking back into the curtain, Dixie could also see other employees manipulating machines that projected a huge white screen towards the public, they also carried a camera from which they took a cartridge and inserted it into the machine; seconds later, it began to broadcast a video accompanied by images where the circus artists appeared, as well as the tamers with the animals, either in other shows or giving them food as a prize at the end of the training, even appeared the photo that had been taken to Diddy that same afternoon with the tamers.

"Your picture of training this afternoon appeared, Diddy," Dixie whispered with a few small laughs.

"What?!" Diddy exclaimed. "Oh, no!"

At the end, the tamer of the patched eye came out to the track with microphone in hand to welcome. The whole atmosphere outside was pleasant: there was a crowd of people excited to want to watch the show, accompanied by children with candies in hand and animal-themed accessories.

"Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the Annual Festival of Zoovlaki Brothers Circus" said the one-eyed tamer "The biggest circus in the city, where you will laugh and have fun tonight with our talented artists, and of course, with the show of our beloved animals..."

"Wow! We are *very beloved* to them," a lion commented wryly from his cage.

"... and without further ado, enjoy the function!"

The music turned on, and soon after, the people behind the curtain took to the track as a parade, accompanied by two elephants that had been freed for a while from their cages. With all that, they were applauded by the crowd of people in the stands.

Subsequently, the show began. The first numbers were of the acrobats who performed incredible tricks such as walking on a giant wheel, driving a unicycle along with several people on board, performing contortions and aerial dances, and could not miss the typical tricks such as tightrope, juggling or trapeze and, finally, could not miss the show of clowns who made people laugh out loud. After all, the circus numbers were really impressive. Dixie, while observing each of them, was so fascinated, that for a moment she perceived again the pleasant atmosphere she had when had entered the zoo and even reminded her of her first years of life; she hadn't seen a show like that for years. Among the animals present, she was the only one who could observe the performance, since the rest only passed in the cages... But as she turned her gaze into the curtain, the atmosphere changed; Dixie remembered that the circus was not fun for the rest of the animals, even the jokes of the clowns that could be heard, caused fun only to her and Diddy, since for the rest of the animals nothing seemed to make them smile; they only showed muffled and tired expressions.

Several numbers later, they announced the show of the animals, where the first to leave were the elephants. The attending employees entered the dressing room with keys in hand, and opened the elephants' cages to take them out to the track, being received with loud shouts and applause from the crowd. The number began as they had rehearsed it in the afternoon, with the three tamers as guides on the performance. Successively, the other numbers with animals continued; they did everything as they had rehearsed it, but this time it was more complicated: the platforms were much higher and the rings were now on fire, something that caused a lot of discomfort for those animals. However, people applauded with emotion all those shows as if it were their favorite tv show. At the end of each number, the animals were rewarded with snacks by the tamers, before being returned to their cages in the dressing rooms. No mistreatment was shown to the public as witnessed in training.

The last to present his number was Diddy, who as soon as he entered, was received as if he were a star of great importance. Several people had already seen him at the zoo, which earned him greater admiration from the crowd. Diddy smiled forcibly, since in addition to being flattered by the people, he also felt threatened by the tamers, who before taking him to the stage, warned him again with their shotguns not to try to escape for any reason.

The tamers didn't accompany him to the front, as Diddy could do the tricks himself. Those tricks and acrobatics that Diddy performed were similar to those that the human acrobats did, which was the most striking for the rest of the people. He ended his participation with a fall on a trampoline, being applauded by the people for a long time. His whole performance would have been a fun time for Diddy... were it not for the harsh and fixed threatening gazes of the three tamers. Finally, the tamers took him to his cage again, before giving the farewell words to the public.

And that was a day in the life of that circus, an incredible and fun show for people, but quite the opposite for the animals that lived there.

The employees of the circus put the caged animals back in their room like the beginning. After they had cleaned them and removed all their accessories, they left the room and left them to sleep.

It was late at night, and the room was dark. Again, there were only the animals, who were already preparing to sleep. With the exception of Diddy; he was scared and didn't want to be in that place anymore, not after seeing what the tamers and their training were really like. Dixie was also present, seriously thinking about how to get Diddy out of there; what she would have to do was find a way to steal the keys from one of the tamers.

"Are there circus performances every day?" Dixie asked the rest of the animals.

"Not always," replied an elephant. "But tomorrow and the day after there will also be."

"How did you guys... get here?" Diddy asked them after a moment of silence. "If that can be known, of course."

Everyone looked up and looked as if they had been asked something they didn't feel comfortable answering, in fact, none of them wanted to answer at first.

"Well... I've been living here for as long as I can remember," an elephant encouraged himself to talk with a low look. "I've heard that I was separated from my mom as soon as I was born."

"Some of us were kidnapped without us noticing," added one of the lions. "They would shoot darts at us to sleep, and suddenly we would appear here with these monstrous gentlemen."

"I was kidnapped as a child," said one of the zebras in a muted tone. "I had a big family that I don't even remember their faces anymore. I was first from the zoo but then I became part of the circus, I thought it would be fun, but no."

"I was brought not many years ago," one of the gorillas commented sadly. "I had a son who now I don't know where he is or how he is without me."

"My brother and I were also brought as children; we were separated from our families," added a tiger with a look of indignation. "Do you know? My brother was the one who destroyed the eye of one of those tamers in an attempt to escape... But those three stupid ones killed my brother."

"The three of us were captured from where we lived," the little bears added. "In fact, it was my mother who left one of those tamers without half of his arm," the bears looked down and heaved a sigh. "But they still managed to bring us here. We even had more brothers here, but... you could imagine what those monstrous tamers did to them."

The rest of the animals also told similar stories: some had been born in that place, but most said that they were separated from their families at a very young age. Those stories touched Diddy and Dixie... Even Dixie was finding the matter somewhat familiar...

"By the way, what were your names, little monkeys?" an elephant asked them after a while.

"I'm Diddy."

"And I'm Dixie."

"Are you siblings?" a rhino asked them.

"No, we're friends," Diddy replied.

"Friends, huh?" said a zebra, looking up. "Or are you... a *couple*?"

"No, no, we're just friends," Dixie interrupted, smiling with some little nerves along with Diddy.

"And where do you come from?"

Then, Diddy and Dixie spent several minutes talking a little about themselves with the other animals; it seemed that there was already a little more confidence compared to when they first arrived. Likewise, the animals told them about them even though, due to the lifestyle they had, they didn't have much to tell.

Finally, the wee hours had arrived and all the animals began to fall asleep. The last to stay awake were Diddy and Dixie, as they were still thinking about how to get out of there; they just had to see how everyone slept. Diddy was sitting inside his cage and Dixie was next to him.

"I thought this would be fun, but it's all a prison," Diddy said with his arms crossed.

"You're right, this circus is terrible," Dixie added with utter disappointment. "In the circus I was in many years ago, tamers and other people were not like that."

"Didn't they beat you up or anything the same as here?" Diddy asked.

"Not at all, that is, they only scolded us if someone behaved a little badly, but they never treated us as ugly as those three tamers do here. People there even took care of us... On the other hand, here, it's really a whole prison."

"Oh, this is my fault," Diddy reproached himself, throwing his head against the bars. "I shouldn't have gone out like that just that night, we wouldn't be in this confinement."

"No, Diddy... *it's not* your fault you got caught," Dixie replied, taking pity on him. "Now we just have to find a way out of here."

Both remained silent, still wondering what could happen in the next few days and wondering if they would get out of there.

"Uhh, Dixie," Diddy said after a while of silence. "How do you think we'll get out of here?"

"The tamers have keys... I just have to get them and..." Dixie was with her eyes narrowing and starting to doze next to Diddy's cage.

"Hey, you can't fall asleep right here, you can be found out," Diddy told her, laughing a little and giving her little pushes through the bars, to which Dixie reacted again. She was very tired, as she hadn't slept at all since the day before. "Well, anyways, tomorrow we'll surely leave here. But where are you going to sleep?"

"There are several hiding places around here," Dixie replied, standing up. "And I'd better sleep by now, I'm really sleepy. See you tomorrow, Diddy."

"Okay, Dixie. Rest well."

Dixie began walking to a hiding place between the cages. Diddy was going to sleep too... but suddenly, it occurred to him to ask a curious question to Dixie that he had had in his mind during the last moments.

"Uhh, Dixie."

"Yeah?" she said, returning to his cage.

"By the way... So, weren't really you with... Jemky?" he asked curiously, to which Dixie made an instant gesture of disgust.

"Did you really think I'd date that burnt fur thug?" Dixie said with a frown.

With that said, Dixie continued to walk towards her sleeping place. After hearing that answer, Diddy took a few small and silent leaps of excitement for a moment, accompanied by a wide smile; he felt how a small part of his enthusiasm was restarted in the middle of the situation in which they were. Later, with a small smile of relief, he settled down to sleep in his cage.

"Uhh... Diddy," Dixie called him, returning to his cage after a couple of minutes.

"Yeah?" Diddy replied again, still smiling.

"I-it's that... there's one thing I have to tell you," Dixie said, suddenly showing a frightened face... She looked very different from how she was a few minutes ago.

Diddy noticed her sudden change in expression, so he stopped smiling and started looking at her strangely.

"Yeah? What's up, Dixie?"

"It's that... It's a-about... *J-Jemky*," she replied in a trembling, almost stuttering voice, which increased Diddy's curiosity.

"Uhh... yeah?... What about him?" Diddy asked, looking confused at Dixie's face.

"I-it's t-that I..." suddenly, Dixie's face was turning pale and she began to tremble as if she was having difficulty letting go of her words. She took a heavy breath before continuing. "*I... I shot him!*"

Diddy opened his eyes as wide as he could and was completely paralyzed by what Dixie said; he wasn't so sure at first if what he had just heard from her was true.

"W-what... *What?!*" Diddy exclaimed loudly that he almost woke the others up, but then he spoke quietly. "What are you talking about?!... So... you... Did you kil-"

"I don't know, I guess!" interrupted Dixie, frightened and in a low voice too. "B-but it was an accident, I-I didn't want to get to that and-"

"Wait, wait, calm down!" he interrupted by calming her down and putting his hands on her shoulders behind bars, still trying to process whether what she had just revealed was true. "Are you serious?... And... How did that happen?"

"Well, it happened on the last day of school, after leaving," Dixie replied in a frightened voice. "He was chasing me because I was going to look for you to tell you what was happening, but then he stopped me and threatened me. And then I attacked him and ran aimlessly off a cliff... and that's where it all happened."

"What are you saying?!" Diddy exclaimed, finishing processing it. "But how did you reach to do that, Dixie?"

"That's where he reached me and told me not to tell anything about what happened with the emerald and the pyramid, or else... they four were going to hurt you. There I couldn't take it anymore and I confronted him, I managed to take the gun from him and pointed it at him... I wasn't going to shoot him, but then he took out another one he had saved and I didn't know what to do, and... I just shot. Oh, and since we were near that cliff, he fell into the river due to the hit."

Suddenly, Diddy had been cold with what she told him and, at the same time, he was astonished to hear how Dixie had been brave enough to face one of those four bad children... even if he was at gunpoint. But anyway, he noticed a guilty and frightened expression in Dixie; the situation seemed to look very serious.

"Dixie... that is... A-Are you really telling me that?!" he asked her, still not recovering from the impact. "And ... did the other kongs know?"

"No, but they found him on the banks of the river the next day, and they say that a group of apes took him, but we don't know who. In fact, everyone on DK Island was scandalized by that too... Even with your missing they think that a thief is on the loose or a gang that steals children and they even believe that they did the same to you."

"What?! But... didn't you tell them anything?"

"No, how do you think I was going to tell them, 'I was the one who hurt that child found in the river?'" Dixie replied before putting her frightened face back on. "But I'm afraid... to be accused of being a criminal... and that they impose some punishment on me."

"No, I don't think they'll impose it on you if you only did it in defense. I know they'll believe you, Dixie," Diddy said before pausing and trying to defuse the situation. "Hey... but did that really happen?"

"Yeah!" replied Dixie, still feeling guilty, before looking down. "Ugh... But I really didn't want that to happen... I'm afraid they know it was me. I mean, of course I was going to defend myself, but I didn't want to get to that either."

Indeed, that boy everyone was talking about on DK Island was Jemky, and yes... Dixie was the one who had done it. Deep down, she also carried that charge of conscience, which she had for days and which worsened with Diddy's missing. No one on DK Island knew that detail... except for Dixie's family, which was the last thing she confessed to them before going out to find Diddy.

Something that had reassured her even a little, was that Diddy at least had not been captured by the quartet of bullies, because she feared that because of Jemky's matter, they would do something to

Diddy in revenge.

Diddy was still shocked and at the same time worried about Dixie with what she said she had done.

"No... don't worry, Dixie. Surely, they will not discover you if no one else knows. In addition... Jemky may have survived, though if so... I just hope the other three fools don't exact revenge... For now, go to rest, okay?" Diddy said, patting her on the shoulder and trying to calm her down, even if he wasn't so calm after the news either. "Okay, first we have to get out of here, and as soon as we get back to the island, we'll try to fix it... I promise."

"Okay, Diddy," Dixie replied with a look of insecurity. "I just hope nothing bad happens anymore."

With that said, Dixie retreated again to go to his provisional resting place. She looked quite fearful after having given that revelation.

For his part, Diddy stayed watching her until she went to rest, and then he also settled back into his cage. When a few minutes ago he was smiling as he prepared to sleep, now he was all cold after having heard Dixie's event; it never crossed his mind that something like this would happen. As if it hadn't been enough to know that those bad kids had reappeared armed, he had now known that Dixie might have gotten into trouble... in serious trouble. Anyway, he couldn't do anything else for the time being, so he continued trying to sleep, even if now it would cost him a little.

Chapter 25: The Keys

The next day, all the animals were waking up. It hadn't been a quality night's sleep for Diddy and Dixie; the spaces where they had to sleep were very uncomfortable, but still, they were enough for a restful sleep.

Suddenly, the door of the room opened, waking up the two kongs in an instant. The people entered, again with pillars of food behind them and, as the day before, they distributed it to each of the animals. The food was the same, so Diddy had to forcibly eat it, while Dixie still carried bananas in her backpack. Upon completion, the employees left the room. A multitude of human voices could also be heard again outside the zoo.

"Did you sleep well?" Diddy asked Dixie as he saw her reach his cage.

"No," Dixie replied, rubbing her head. "The hiding place was very narrow... Do you want bananas?"

Dixie gave Diddy a couple of bananas and sat next to his cage while they ate. As she looked around the room, she noticed something that caught her eye instantly... By chance, the employees who were recently there had left the front door open, which lit Dixie's mind.

"Diddy, look!" she pointed to the door, and Diddy turned to look.

"You're not thinking about going there, are you?" Diddy asked, catching Dixie's idea.

"And where else could I go?" said Dixie, shrugging. "Maybe I'll find the keys so I can open your cage."

"But what if those people catch you?" Diddy exclaimed worriedly.

"I'll know how to hide well, don't worry," Dixie replied without taking her eyes off the door.

Dixie immediately walked to the door and took a look outside. There was a wide hall with some doors to the surroundings, and a staircase could be seen at the back that led to the upstairs.

"Hey, Trixie girl," an elephant who was caged near the door called her. "I hope you don't think about walking through that door or you'll end up just like us."

"I just need some keys," Dixie replied.

"The only ones who have those keys are those three tamers. Do you know what danger it entails to do that?"

"But I'll never get Diddy out of here without doing anything," she replied and, without arguing further, walked through the door and began to walk stealthily through the new room.

Dixie looked at every corner of the hall: this one had a refined look with decoration accessories and elegant paintings. Suddenly, footsteps were heard coming towards where Dixie was, so she immediately ran to the staircase. Then, a group of assistant employees passed by.

"Hey! But who left this door open?" one of them exclaimed, instantly closing the door to the animal room.

Dixie continued to go upstairs to see what was above. But then, she was paralyzed when, a few centimeters in front of her, a human leg and another prosthetic leg appeared. She looked up, fearing that she had failed so quickly in her search; it was one of the tamers... Fortunately, he was reading some sheets of paper that served to cover Dixie's presence. She immediately slipped away just as the tamer raised his head and went downstairs. For a moment, Dixie's breathing had quickened as she reached the next floor.

The atmosphere of the upstairs was also quite elegant, it also had large paintings and shelves. Dixie, out of curiosity, took a quick look at everything that was hanging on the wall, where it could see several magazine and newspaper covers about the circus and the zoo, with titles such as: *"Zoovlaki, awarded to the best"*, *"We visited the Zoovlaki Zoo, an amazing place"*, *"The Great Circus of the Zoovlaki Brothers, an attraction not to be missed"*, *"To the best and most impressive circus in the city"*, in addition to current and old photos of the place. There were even pictures of the three tamers when they were younger and with all their limbs complete, but they also looked different... Dixie looked at them in detail and with a gesture of strangeness. Later, she saw another article titled: *"Award to the Owens brothers, known as the 'Zoovlaki' Brothers"*, accompanied by a subtitle: *"Brand, Brett and Fred Owens, famous for their Zoovlaki Circus"*, which seemed to mention the names of those tamers.

She continued walking until she saw other old magazine pages with titles as: *"The Owens 'Zoovlaki' Brothers and Their Pets"*, along with another old photo of the tamers, accompanied by what appeared to be two more tamers, and carrying several little primates. But that old news became darker when later there was a page titled: *"Two of the Owens brothers died in an accident: Bill and Bert Owens"*.

Suddenly, footsteps could be heard going upstairs, so Dixie ran aimlessly through the corridors nearby. She stopped instantly when, at the end of a corner, a group of employees were coming. She ran in the opposite direction and, to bad luck, everywhere she went there were people. Dixie was thinking that maybe it was a bad idea to go out and tour the interior of the building. But she couldn't give up; she had to find a way to get those keys anyway.

While hiding on a bookshelf, waiting for a group of employees to pass, she saw a semi-open door at the end of the hall; this one was larger and had a sign that said *"Management and Administration."* When there were no more people nearby, she went to that door, looked cautiously and tried to enter through the narrow space that was, trying not to move or sound it.

Upon entering completely, she saw that it was a large room with several shelves filled with a pile of books and papers. There were also a lot of photos on the wall, almost all of animals and tamers and, as it was seen a few minutes ago: there were photos, not of three, but of five tamers, of which two of them weren't in that world anymore. She even reached to see a small text in one of the photos, where those five tamers were named: Brand, Brett, Fred, Bill and Bert, the first three being already known.

Suddenly, Dixie stopped when she looked straight ahead: there was the one-eyed tamer sitting in a chair next to a desk; he was right in front of her and, if it weren't for the fact that his head was down leafing through some magazines, he would have already found her out. Without making a single noise, Dixie crawled on the floor and went behind the shelves where, through an empty space of the same, she could better observe the tamer, who apparently was the leader among the

three and head of the entire zoo. The man was looking at the magazines, and next to him was a dish with remnants of the same meat skewer meal they were seen eating the day before; Dixie assumed that it was the so-called "zoovlaki" mentioned by the animals.

For several minutes, nothing interesting was happening there. The tamer didn't even stand up, much less there was any trace of a key. Suddenly, the front door resounded, giving Dixie a little scare.

"What's up, Brand?" the other two tamers appeared, greeting the one-eyed man as they passed into the room.

"Just having lunch too," replied the one-eyed tamer, smiling at them. "I almost ran out of lunch; These days have been very heavy."

"It's true, we must also see how we manage the plan of mec-"

"Silence! That's *not* talked about here," the one-eyed man whispered to them between his teeth. "Or speak it quietly."

"Ah, that's right... Better not to mention that topic."

"Although in any case, it has already been sent to be launched so that it's ready in the coming months, with at least forty more copies, apart from the first ones that have already been made. So, well... only that I can tell you, let's switch to the topic of tonight's performances."

Then the three men talked about the next circus performance and the training of the animals. In addition to that, the two last-arrived men had also brought a dish with that meal. Dixie just looked at them strangely from her hiding place, while wondering how much the tamers liked to eat that. Even, remembering what the circus animals had told her, she was disturbed by the idea that it was true that those tamers prepared such food with their animals.

While listening to their conversations that she didn't understand at all, Dixie realized that next to her was a camera, which caught her attention: it was different from the ones they had on DK Island, since it looked more modernized. Next to it, there were also several cartridges with photographic rolls containing the same photos that were shown in the previous night's function. Dixie began to inspect the camera better and turned it on. While playing with all the buttons it had, she accidentally pressed the capture photo button, causing it to sound and emit a light. Dixie dropped it instantly, and at the same time caught the attention of the three tamers.

"Say what?!" they exclaimed in fright. "And what was that?!"

For a moment, Dixie felt that she was found, so she immediately ran to another bookshelf. The three tamers went to where she had been to investigate what that photographic light and sound had been. Luckily, they didn't get to find Dixie.

"But what the heck was that?!" exclaimed the one-eyed tamer.

"It's the camera!" said the one-armed tamer, picking up the camera from the ground. "But how did it activate itself?"

"Check the pictures, Brett!"

The three tamers began searching in the camera, while Dixie was hidden behind other shelves. She was tense and not knowing what to do now... until she saw an object on the floor, under the desk of the tamers... *It was the keys!* It was the perfect time to catch them, as the three men were distracted by the camera. Dixie scrolled through the shelves until she could reach the desk.

"How the heck did the camera photograph us?!" the three wondered when they saw in the roll of the camera a blurry photo of themselves, which Dixie had taken by accident.

"Very strange!" exclaimed the one-armed tamer.

Dixie was on the side of the desk and began to reach out so she could reach for the keys.

"Huh?! What's that under the desk?" the one-eyed tamer exclaimed suspiciously, pointing exactly to where Dixie was.

Dixie froze instantly, without even looking up; she clearly felt that she had been seen by the three tamers, so she became more tense and looked up little by little.

"Oh, they are my keys," replied the tamer of the prosthetic leg, going to pick them up.

"Geez, Fred!" the one-eyed tamer exclaimed. "You always drop your keys."

Dixie felt a deep relief to see that she was not found out, but in turn, she felt a great frustration, since the tamer took the keys and she lost her chance to get them. Then, the three tamers headed back to the desk, so Dixie had to hide behind the shelves again.

Suddenly, she could see that a desk drawer was partially open and there were other keys! But it would be riskier to reach them, since the three tamers were crowded around. Still, Dixie plucked up the courage and tried to find a way to get there. She climbed down from the bookshelf and crawled stealthily to the desk. She stopped behind the chair where the tamer was and, very carefully, reached out to open the drawer more and try to grab the keys... but to her bad luck, the one-eyed tamer, by involuntary action, slammed the drawer shut and almost caught Dixie's hand.

"Hey, here were my keys too," said the tamer, opening the drawer again and taking the keys in his hand, then putting them in his shirt pockets.

A minute later, the three tamers left the room, leaving the door closed. Dixie couldn't contain her frustration at not being able to get the keys; that would be the only way to get Diddy out of that place... And, as if that were not enough, now she was locked in that room.

Luckily, there was a high window on the wall facing out into the hallways, so Dixie climbed the shelves and, with the help of her hair, was able to reach the small window to leave quietly... But now, the problem was that she had lost sight of the tamers and, consequently, the keys.

Diddy was still locked in the cage. He had never felt so bored; it was too overwhelming to spend caged for long hours. In short, he no longer felt good in that circus/zoo; he just wished he could close his eyes and wake up again on DK Island, or go back in time four days ago and better have stayed at home or at least gone somewhere else. He cursed Jemky and the group in his mind as well

for causing such conflicts between him and Dixie... although he also regretted after remembering what Dixie told him the night before.

Suddenly, he heard footsteps inside the room; it was Dixie coming back and entering through one of the high windows.

"Did you get the keys?" Diddy asked, hoping for an affirmative answer. But seeing Dixie's frustrated face, he noticed the opposite.

"No," Dixie complained. "I had them so close a couple of times but I didn't make it."

"We told you it wasn't easy, girl," said a zebra from his cage. "Those tamers take care of those keys as their own lives."

Diddy looked down upon hearing the answer; it was also frustrating for him to remain locked up. Still, he didn't want to make Dixie feel guilty; he realized how she had gotten there and crossed the city to get to the zoo for him, and she was still looking for a way to free him so they could return to DK Island together. On that side, Diddy felt somewhat better; had he known that Dixie would do something like that for him, he surely wouldn't have been sad for her in previous days.

"Don't worry... We'll get out of here for sure," Diddy said, smiling and placing a hand on her shoulder through the bars. "We'll already find some way; we just have to survive a little longer."

"I hope so," Dixie replied, lowering her gaze.

Several hours passed, with nothing to do. The only thing to distract themselves was to talk to all the animals although, to tell the truth, they were not so cheered up to have long conversations. Dixie also told Diddy everything she had seen while exploring the building inside and her attempts to get the key.

There were long and stressful empty hours. Until later, a group of employees entered with the piles of food, and began to distribute it to each of the animals. Dixie, on the other hand, had no more bananas reserved, so this time, Diddy gave her half of his food, despite the poor quality of it.

"In a few minutes there will be training again, little monkeys," an elephant announced.

"Oh, great," Diddy replied wryly.

Just like the day before, minutes later, the employees re-entered, took the rolling cages again and began moving the animals to take them to the training room. Dixie, therefore, also followed them stealthily.

They all went to the training room. The cages were ordered, and employees walked next to them to keep an eye on the animals. Dixie kept hiding behind the cages, and hoped to get another chance to get the keys, as the tamers would be nearby.

A few minutes later, the three tamers arrived, with whip tied to their clothes and with all their hard attitude to train the animals. Diddy was scared to see them again and felt his whole body tremble just thinking about when his training turn came.

The tamers, as the day before, also brought in their hands the same plates of meat skewers while they were finishing eating it; that food seemed to please them too much as the animals had told.

Minutes later, training was to begin. The first to train would again be the felines, so the three men went to their cages.

"Geez, my keys!" the one-eyed tamer exclaimed as he rummaged through his pockets. "Oh, yes, I left them saved on the desktop again."

"Take it, use mine, Brand," said another tamer, handing him his keys.

Those words caught Dixie's full attention. The three tamers, along with several employees, were in that training room, therefore, in the building there would be no one... The keys! They had just mentioned that one of them was on the tamer's desk.

As the tamers began training the felines, Dixie began crawling very stealthily under the cages, and then left the training room. No one could see her anymore, so she ran to the front door of the room where the animals rested, which, luckily, was open again.

There was no human presence in the halls of the building, so Dixie made the same journey to reach the tamers' office without problems. When she managed to enter, she immediately went to the tamers' desk and checked the drawers... Her green eyes began to glow when she finally took what she was looking for.

"Yes! We'll get out of here!" she whispered with a big smile and jumping with excitement as she finally held the *bunch of keys* in her hands. This time, it was so easy that even she couldn't believe it.

Dixie took the road back, all excited to finally be able to leave with Diddy from that place. She went back to the training room and hid behind the cages again. She wanted to inform Diddy, but she couldn't release him yet, since at that time there were the employees next to the cages as strict supervisors.

But in the meantime, the scenes that were seen in front... were of the tamers training each group of animals, beating them with constant lashes and often threatening them if one put up resistance.

"*Stupid bear! Get moving!*" exclaimed the one-armed tamer, giving a lash to one of the three bears that were training later.

The bears were clearly tired while the tamers held them at whip point. They were forced to stand on two legs for long minutes on balls, and another of them was mounted on a bicycle rolling around the track; among the three, the latter was the one who was most exhausted and in turn the one who was receiving the most lashes.

"*This bear is useless! Accelerate faster!*" exclaimed the tamer before giving him a strong lash in one of the wounds of the small bear that made him growl with pain.

"*IDIOT TAMER!*" shouted aggressively the little bear which, to human language, sounded like loud growls.

"*Hey! No growling, little bear!*" replied the tamer before whipping him once more.

"*Insolent!*" added another bear standing on two legs furiously, seeing his brother being whipped.

"*Silence you too!*" ordered the tamer of the patched eye beating him.

The three bears were noticed furious and quite stressed that they began to growl at the three tamers without stopping.

"Shut up right now or we'll shut you up!" the one-eyed tamer shouted at them, whipping the three bears.

Suddenly, the three little bears got off on dry land and began to corner the tamers, until a few seconds later, they growled and lunged wildly at them.

"STAY STILL! STAY STILL! NOOO!" shouted the tamer of the prosthetic leg, trying to flee from two bears and pushing them away with the whips.

Meanwhile, the one-armed tamer was being cornered by the other bear. The employees began to scream in terror at the scene that was suddenly assembled. Diddy and Dixie, in different places, covered their eyes and at the same time without stopping looking. When suddenly, one of the bears began to scratch the tamer, while the rest of the animals only looked attentively at the scene and were worried about what the bears were doing, since when an animal rebelled in that way, the tamers used to apply cruel measures of punishment... or worse.

Suddenly, the bear that was cornering the one-armed tamer gave him a long and wild scratch on his other arm that remained, it was so strong that it made the man scream in pain and did not even have his other hand to hold the wound.

"STAND BACK!" the one-eyed tamer appeared with a rifle in hand and, without letting a second pass, began to press the trigger and fired in the direction of each of the three little bears.

Instantly, the three bears began to stagger from side to side and doze, until finally... they fell to the ground and all stood motionless.

All the animals, including Diddy and Dixie, were paralyzed upon seeing the scene of the massacre.

"Did you kill them?" asked the tamer of the prosthetic leg to the one with the patched eye.

"No, I shot the sedatives, they'll wake up later," replied the one-eyed man, relieving the rest of the animals entirely. "But which one attacked you, Brett?!" he asked with a stern attitude to the tamer who had been scratched.

"It was this," replied the one-armed tamer, pointing with his one bruised hand to the bear lying near him.

The one-eyed tamer cast a stern glance at the bear and re-prepared his sedative weapon. Then, without thinking at all, he aimed at him and began to shoot him mercilessly repeatedly, with which the bear was intercepted by several darts.

"To that one I did so," said the one-eyed man coldly, before blowing out the weapon of sedatives. "We won't present the number of the brat bears tonight."

The employees gathered and began moving the two sleeping bears to their cages, while the other was taken away. Other employees went to help the tamer of the injured arm. Then, the other two tamers continued to train the rest of the animals.

The animals that were still caged cursed and roared as much as they could toward the three tamers. Although they were already accustomed to seeing such scenes, none left them alone and deeply outraged them. For their part, Diddy and Dixie were all horrified by the scene they had just witnessed; now they were sure that those circus tamers were complete criminals who had no mercy and didn't care what animals they hurt. The impact was so strong that even Dixie lost her excitement of having gotten the keys momentarily.

After long hours of training, just like the day before, the employees began to prepare the animals for the circus performance in all their colorful costumes. At the end, they were all transferred to the dressing rooms of the circus. They were all, except for the bears, since they left them stored due to the event that occurred that afternoon.

It was already later compared to the previous day, so the other circus performers arrived immediately to prepare in the dressing rooms. Dixie still had no chance to get Diddy out of there with human presence in front of her at all times.

The performance began and the stands were again full of people eager to see the show. The tamers were giving the welcome, including the tamer of the arm injured by one of the bears. The technicians were preparing the lighting and projecting back the images of the animals being apparently well treated by the tamers. The human artists gave their show of exotic acrobatics and, of course, the animals performed their numbers, although to tell the truth, they were very low spirits as a result of the event that occurred during the training of that afternoon.

One more night, the circus performance had finished and, late at night, the animals were returned to their respective cages in their main room. Afterwards, all the attending employees left the venue.

"Hey... what happened?" asked one of the bears already awake along with the other, noticing that one of them was missing. "Where's Berny?!" he exclaimed, referring to the missing bear.

All the animals present, including Diddy and Dixie, looked at them very sadly, as none wanted to give them the fatal news.

"Well, he is..." an elephant dared to tell with difficulty. "Your brother is..."

"You know..." continued a rhino. "It happened to him what happens to everyone who attacks those monstrous ones... And your brother almost shattered the one-armed tamer's other arm."

"No..." the little bears, paralyzed at the announcement, pronounced. "No, why?! Why always us?!"

The pair of bears that now remained, immediately burst into tears, being then accompanied by the rest of the animals.

"I'm so sorry, little friends," said an elephant, wiping away a few tears too.

"He didn't deserve that," added a zebra also with tears in his eyes. "He just wanted to get free... just like all of us."

Suddenly, the atmosphere became depressing. All the animals accompanied the little bears in their grief and began to cry too. They had already mentioned that it was common for those tamers to end

the life of one of their animals, but even so, when that happened, it was a situation that put them in mourning.

Dixie, who was next to Diddy's cage and watching the mourning of all the animals, also could not contain herself and a few tears escaped; that event moved her too much and to have seen it live was very heartbreaking. Seconds later, Diddy also joined in and began to fill with tears in his eyes.

After several minutes of mourning, more than half an hour of absolute tranquility passed when the animals began to fall asleep. Diddy and Dixie were still awake, too sad upon seeing the depressing life those animals had. Suddenly, Dixie remembered something very important to announce to Diddy.

"Uhh... Diddy."

"Yeah?"

"I have... the keys," she said, pulling the bunch of keys from her backpack. Despite the bad events they witnessed that day, she smiled a little at him. Diddy was amazed and began to smile little by little.

"What?! That's great!" Diddy exclaimed, cheering up a little. "You got them, Dixie!"

Both smiled again when they saw that at least, they would have a way to leave that horrible place. Dixie got up and started trying each of the keys to see which one was correct, until finally... one matched. Diddy slowly pushed the door open completely; finally... he was free of those bars. As soon as he came out, he looked at Dixie for a few seconds, and soon went to hug her.

"Dixie!" he exclaimed with great emotion. Deep down, it was something he wanted to do as soon as he met her again.

"Diddy!" she exclaimed, reciprocating the embrace with joy.

"I missed you," Diddy said when they separated, but then he took on a normal tone again. "I mean... I missed going outside and-"

"I missed you too, Diddy," Dixie interrupted with a few small laughs.

Instantly, Diddy tried not to blush; it had been a few days since that hadn't happened to him, so he changed the topic immediately.

"Uhh, well, now what?"

"We'll try to get out there. Follow me," Dixie pointed to the small high window through which she first entered that room.

The pair of kongs came down from the cages area, and went to a corner where some old boxes were in the room. Upon arrival, both began to pile up these cardboard boxes to reach the high window and finally be able to leave. Then, they started climbing them, until Diddy stopped and looked back... observing for the last time the room full of caged animals with whom he lived for a couple of days.

"Do you think... that they'll be fine?" Dixie, who was looking at the same thing, said.

"Uhh... Well... Not really, but... this is where they live, isn't it?" he replied insecurely.

They stared at them for a while longer, until finally, they continued to climb the boxes until they almost reached the window. Being already up, Dixie didn't stop being chased by doubt about whether the animals would be okay... Suddenly, she looked at the bunch of keys she still carried in her hand.

"Hey, Diddy," she called him, and Diddy turned around. "I was thinking if..."

"What's going on?"

"Well... We have the keys... of all the cages and..."

"Are you thinking about..." Diddy began to grasp Dixie's idea. "I don't think so, Dixie. It would be crazy!"

"Well, yes, it's that. Just look," Dixie added, "the life these animals have is horrible, so... what if it's our chance to... *save them*?" she said, getting the keys up and smiling a little.

Diddy looked at her somewhat strangely at first; such a sudden plan was not expected, which generated many doubts.

"But do you know the chaos that will be generated?" Diddy replied with some concern. "I mean, this is a city, how are we going to get them all out of here?"

"Diddy..." she said, placing a hand on his shoulder and speaking earnestly. "Have you noticed how cruel that life they have is? It's true that it would be crazy to get them out, but I think that having the opportunity to help them and not doing it would be... terrible too."

Diddy was silent for a few seconds and looked at all the animals again. He remembered the prison they lived being locked in a cage, all the mistreatment they suffered in training and, finally, that tragic event they lived that afternoon and that was only one of the many that occurred frequently there. He finally remembered every word Dixie had just said, and after a few seconds, he placed his hand on her shoulder as well.

"Well... we can try!" he said with a smile and shrugging.

Dixie widened her eyes as they glowed and a big smile was drawn at Diddy's positive response.

"Yeah!" she exclaimed, jumping for joy.

Suddenly, Dixie hugged Diddy by surprise and instantly gave him a kiss on the cheek in excitement... But then, she blushed a little and tried to regain her normal posture.

"Uhh... Well. So, let's tell those animals," Dixie said, trying to hold back her nerves, before heading to the animal cages again.

But on the other hand, Diddy was all paralyzed; his heart raced instantly and he got a color on his face that could be said to be *similar* to that of his clothes. He forgot everything for a moment as a broad smile appeared on his face, accompanied by several thoughts hovering in his mind about... *Dixie*.

"Hey, wake up!" Dixie whispered in the middle of the cages.

Diddy reset back into what they were and headed towards where Dixie was.

"Hey, Dixie, wait!" Diddy said, taking her arm. "We still need to plan it well."

"You're right," Dixie replied. "This is a city, isn't it?"

"First we must think about when we'll get them out," Diddy said thoughtfully. "If we do it now, it's going to be complicated."

"How about tomorrow just before the show?" Dixie suggested.

"Yes! It sounds good. That way they won't scare people and everything will be clear."

"Agreed. Let's tell everyone right now."

Diddy and Dixie began to whisper and make little noises in each of the cages. They didn't want to wake them up, but it was a topic that had to be talked about right then and there.

"Hey, everybody! Wake up, we have to tell you something," they both whispered to the animals.

One by one, the animals opened their eyes again, all with a face of interrupted sleep.

"Huh? Look, the monkey Diddy came out of his cage!" announced an elephant standing up, to which the rest joined in amazement and began to murmur.

"Yes, I managed to get him out of that cage," Dixie said smiling, waiting for a reaction from the animals, but they still didn't change their faces of exhaustion.

"That's right, we won't be here anymore... And neither will you!" Diddy added, smiling firmly.

"We're going to get you all out of here!" Dixie announced, holding up the keys and showing them to all the animals.

"*What?!*" everyone exclaimed in unison, astonished to see that Dixie had managed to obtain the keys from one of the tamers.

As expected, none seemed to believe it; they were so shocked, as obtaining the keys from those tamers was almost impossible.

"That's right, we want to release you all," Diddy added, maintaining his attitude. "But we need your help. Tomorrow night, before the last performance starts, will be the best time to do it. What do you say?"

A few seconds of silence passed as the animals looked at them with a face of weirdness, as if they wanted to tell them that the two were a pair of crazy ones giving a utopian explanation.

"Wow... What a good joke," an elephant told them with a forced smile.

Suddenly, the rest of the animals began to murmur similar things, downplaying the proposal, which disappointed Diddy and Dixie.

"Hey, it's serious!" Diddy exclaimed, catching everyone's attention.

Everyone fell silent; they hadn't reacted the way Diddy and Dixie expected.

"But wait, wait a minute... Really... are those the keys?" a gorilla asked them, very incredulous.

"Yeah! Look, I'll prove it to you," Dixie exclaimed.

Dixie reached for one of the keys, which had numbers marked for each cage, and then opened the cage where the gorilla was.

Suddenly, the other animals changed their faces as they saw how the gorilla proceeded to slowly peek out of the cage. The gorilla, when putting his feet out of the cage, and without tamers nearby, showed a certain sense of freedom that he didn't seem to have for a long time.

"Have you already seen?" Dixie pointed to the gorilla.

Then, Dixie proceeded to open more cages and, therefore, the animals gradually peeked out of them, until finally getting out; it was a new sensation for most of them.

"We are... out of the cage," said an elephant without recovering from the astonishment, before repeating it aloud. *"We are out of the cage!"*

Suddenly, the whole herd of animals reacted and their faces changed in their entirety. For the first time, they could be seen smiling for real, so much so that they began to roam and jump around the room like toddlers in a preschool.

"WE ARE FREE!" they exclaimed with an emotion never before seen in them.

"Yeah, yeah, but wait!" said Diddy trying to calm them down, but they wouldn't hear him because of the excitement of the novelty at the time. *"Hey, listen to us!"*

"Listen to us please!" exclaimed Dixie, waving to everyone.

The animals immediately stopped and looked in the direction of the two kongs.

"Well... it's that we still have *to plan how to* get out of here," Dixie added. "First go back to your cages, one of those men could come and they can see you all."

"Oh... It's true," they all murmured as they returned to their respective cages.

"Are you really going to get us out of here?" asked an elephant with a face of excitement never seen before. To this were added the other animals.

"Can we finally leave this horrible place?"

"Yes, but listen first," Diddy said. "We can't take you all out now because the doors are locked and we don't have the keys for those, so tomorrow-"

"Wait a minute!" a lion interrupted suddenly. "But if we got out of here... *where* would we go?"

Suddenly, the faces of the animals changed again before that mentioned doubt. Everyone began to wonder to each other: what would they do after they left. Their expressions again became doubtful as at the beginning.

"It's true, we have nowhere else to go."

"What will we do next? What will we eat? Where will we live?"

"By the way, out there it's very dangerous, those humans hate us and scare us."

"I've never lived as a wild animal."

"Forget it, little monkeys. It's a huge risk... Anyways we'll die here, as one of us dies every week or every month."

The animals murmured and, as if the emotion had lasted only a couple of minutes, they began to make gestures of rejection towards the proposal. Diddy and Dixie were also discouraged, because they had not thought of that part of the plan: many of these animals, upon spending almost all their lives there, didn't know *how* to survive in the outside world.

"Listen, but do you want to continue living here? With those cruel tamers?" Diddy told them, trying to encourage them. "I mean, just look at how you live in this place: being manipulated like puppets for people's entertainment."

"And by the way," Dixie added, "you shouldn't be afraid of the human people out there; *they* might fear you instead. Tamers may be like that, but people there cannot. I say this because when I arrived in the city, almost everyone feared me, and that I'm of small size... Now look at yourselves, surely you will fear them more since you are much bigger and stronger."

"You are by nature very strong," Diddy continued. "If everyone unites, you'll be able to get out of here anyway, even with everyone united you all are a thousand times stronger and rougher than those three miserable tamers."

"You must bring out your wild animal spirit that those three wretches took from you!" Dixie concluded.

The animals were silent for a few seconds, looking strangely at the pair of little kongs... Unfortunately, it didn't seem to be working; they were not convinced by that idea.

"You'll have to excuse us, little monkeys, but we can't," said a zebra without taking any importance. "If you want to leave, you go; as you are small, it should not be complicated for you to leave here."

The animals were not convinced and continued to murmur in a negative way. Diddy and Dixie couldn't believe how it had truly taken away the natural animal spirit from all the animals in that place.

"No, wait!" one of the little bears suddenly exclaimed, to which they all turned to see him. "I think this pair of monkeys is telling the truth."

"What are you talking about?!" replied a lion looking at him strangely.

Suddenly, the rest of the animals made some gesture of strangeness before the posture that the little bear was taking.

"That is, it's true that we won't know what to do next," continued the bear, "but... they are giving us a *chance* to get out of this prison. This life we have is not natural, our life should be out there, away from all those people, don't you remember when we lived in forests, jungles or savannahs? *We were*

free, until those monstrous ones took that freedom from us. Those who still remember their families, don't you remember how strong they were? We should also carry that strength, but we haven't shown it out, and now... it may be time."

"And just look at us," added the other little bear, apparently taking the same stance as his brother. "Today it was the turn of one of our brothers to leave forever; this may already be normal every month, but this is how all of us will end up if we are still here. And I say that... if we have the opportunity to leave here, I would rather *die on the run from a prison*, rather than die at the hands of those three wretches. If we stay here, we are doomed to die anyway! So, Diddy, Dixie... the two of us, we accompany you... I'll do it for our siblings who are no longer here."

The whole herd fell silent; no one knew what to say, and each was now undecided about whether to join the proposal or not. Several seconds of absolute silence passed, while Diddy and Dixie were still waiting for everyone's answers.

"I'm joining too," added an elephant earnestly after a while.

"So do we," said the tigers.

"To teach those monstrous ones a good lesson!" a lion exclaimed. "I'll also join."

The rest of the animals were joining one by one, until finally, they were determined towards the proposal. That made Diddy and Dixie be happy and jump with excitement.

"And... how and when will we get out of here?" an elephant asked Diddy and Dixie.

"We were thinking the ideal time would be before the show starts," Diddy replied.

"Yes, there will be no people there and we can all leave calmly," Dixie added.

"And what if we also release the zoo animals out there?" suggested a gorilla.

"I don't think so, they do have a better life," replied a tiger.

"But they'll have the same fate as us anyway, I come from there," replied a zebra.

"Then we'll get them out too," Diddy said. "We just have to tell them about the plan."

"It won't be necessary, they'll also want to come with us at that time," commented a rhino.

"Wait, what if those tamers shoot us as we fled?" added a fearful zebra.

"Well, we'll kill them first!" exclaimed a lion full of anger.

"No!" replied a tiger firmly. "That would be in vain. It's better that, while they are alive, they see how *we*, *their sources of fortune*, mock them by escaping."

"Exactly, and also other humans in such an *Animal Control Unit* would end up killing us if we harm people," added an elephant. "They'll have no mercy on us if we do that!"

"But what are we going to do so they don't shoot at us?!" replied the zebra.

All the animals began to wonder among themselves how they would escape safely and avoid failing in the attempt, since after all, those tamers were almost always well equipped with their weapons when they had animals nearby and wouldn't hesitate to act if necessary.

"Hey... I think I came up with something," Dixie said with a smile.

Chapter 26: Wild Escape

Chapter Notes

This chapter will be very long.

It had been a long night for all animals as they planned their escape attempt. Some could not sleep, either because of anxiety and fear that something would not go well, or also because of the excitement of being able to leave that terrible place after several years.

The next day seemed normal, but on the other hand, there were Diddy and Dixie thinking about their escape plan with the whole herd. It was really a very risky thing, but even so, they wouldn't pass up that opportunity to save them all from that *prison*.

That day there was going to be another performance in the circus, therefore, it was another day of long and martyring rehearsals for the animals. Although to tell the truth, they already didn't care, because they were almost certain that this was going to be their last rehearsal. Diddy had to return to his cage and be present at rehearsals to avoid raising suspicion about the plan. Also, moments before training, he hung around with Dixie preparing *some things* so they could have a "safer" escape.

After a long day, the employees got the animals ready again at night and took them to the dressing rooms. Apparently, the exact moment to begin the escape was approaching as planned.

"Did you get the pictures, Dixie?" Diddy asked her when she got to the dressing room.

"Yes, I even left them changed for the performance," she replied with a small laugh. "And did you get the weapons of the tamers?"

"Not exactly, they are very heavy, but I took out their magazines from all of them, so they won't shoot," he replied, showing her several magazines of firearms.

"Wow, how do you know that?"

"The four fools from school taught it to me," Diddy said.

Then, Diddy put all the gun magazines in the backpack that Dixie was carrying.

All the animals were in their cages, prepared for the signal to get out of there. There were no people present in the area.

"Well, I think it's time, I'm going to open your cages," Dixie announced to the animals with excitement.

Dixie began to open each of the cages with the keys, while Diddy stayed to watch through the curtain that no one arrived. Apparently, the plan wasn't going to be that difficult after all.

"Now it's time," Dixie said when she finished opening all the cages and all the animals were out. "And remember: Diddy will go to the front to guide you, while I go last. We will all head towards the beach that is--"

"Oh, no! Here come people!" Diddy interrupted, turning to the animals. "Go back to your cages!"

"Oh, geez!" Dixie exclaimed in frustration.

Immediately, all the animals had to return to their cages, including Diddy. This time, they left their doors semi-closed. Dixie, on the other hand, had to hide under the cages.

Soon, several of the circus employees and performers began to enter the dressing rooms; they had interrupted the escape attempt. The plan was to leave before they arrived to avoid uproar among the people, but to bad luck, the people had arrived ahead of the expected time.

"And now what do we do?" Diddy asked quietly from his cage.

Dixie kept hiding under Diddy's rolling cage, now thinking about what they could do to flee, as things weren't going as planned. They stayed like that for a long time.

"Hey, don't worry, we'll sure get out of here," Dixie whispered with a forced smile, not so sure what she was saying.

"Wait a minute!" one of the human employees suddenly exclaimed. "Why are the cages open?!"

Unfortunately for all the animals, the people present there noticed that the cages were semi-closed and began to close them again immediately one by one.

The performance was about to begin and it could already hear the crowd of people, eager to see the show. Of course, the three tamers also began to be heard on the microphone welcoming everyone. After that, all the circus performers went on stage to make their initial presentation, leaving the animals alone again; they could escape at that time, but the problem was that it was now full of people outside. Dixie, very stealthily, got out again to peek through the curtain.

"And now how will we get out of here?" asked one of the animals.

"Let's get out right now, we have no choice!" suggested an elephant.

"No!" Dixie replied, turning to look at them. "We're going to scare people; it's going to be crazy."

"That doesn't matter!" a lion replied. "I don't think anyone will want to approach us; you have said it yourself."

"Look, they're going to project the images!" Dixie said with an evil smile as she peeked through the curtain. "At least I will be able to see this humiliation."

After the presentation of the show, the projection of pictures of the circus animals began doing various tricks and with the best costumes, which encouraged the public... But this time, the excitement of the entire audience was changing when they realized that this time was different: they could see photos of the *rehearsals*! And yes... of how they really were. People were giving little screams and murmurs when they saw photos, and even videos, of several animals receiving lashes from the tamers, as well as photos of the true appearance of the animals without suits or makeup that they put on them to hide their wounds.

"But what... heck?!" exclaimed one of the tamers in a disguised way, while they watched the projection.

Instantly, the three tamers changed to faces of embarrassment, trying to smile at the audience; they had always been led to believe that animals were in good hands, but now they were being exposed with a different image.

"Who took those pictures?! And how did they get there?!" grumbled the one-eyed tamer throwing murderous glances towards the technical employees.

"We do not know, Mr. Owens, this roll of photos is the same as the one you gave us," the technicians told them.

Dixie, on the other hand, gave little laughs behind the curtain to see how she had managed to expose them.

"Have the photos passed yet?" Diddy asked curiously.

"Yes, you have to see their faces!" Dixie replied with a victorious smile.

During the afternoon of that same day, Dixie had stolen the camera and the roll of photos of the tamers, and changed it for a new one; with that, she took several photos secretly during the training of that afternoon in order to: expose to the public how the life of that circus was really like. The plan was for it to be shown after the escape, but it had already been brought forward.

"Let's get out right now!" an elephant insisted after a while. "It doesn't matter that people get scared; they won't be able to deal with all of us."

Diddy and Dixie thought about it for a moment; at first, they wanted to release them before the show started so as not to scare people away, but now chaos could be created if they left at that very moment... But they also knew it had to be now or never, because they didn't know when else they would have a chance to free them all.

"Okay," Dixie said, finally determined. "Although it will be much riskier to go outside like this in the crowd."

"Okay, then, what are we waiting for?" said a rhino with all the attitude of getting out.

On the other hand, there were the tamers trying to recover the public's spirits. From one moment to another, people were heckling them after seeing those photos where the hidden face of the circus that used to animate them so much was exposed.

"Uh... Well, dear audience present..." said the tamers into the microphone with all the discomfort. "I think it's time for tonight's numbers to start and... hope you enjoy-"

Suddenly, people began to murmur loudly against the three tamers and, as often happens when an audience is not comfortable, they began to throw objects on stage as a sign of opposition.

"I think this will turn out better than I expected!" said Diddy with a laugh as he heard the opposition murmurs from the audience. Then, he spoke to the animals. "Well, I think we can get out now. You already know: go through areas where there are not many people and *don't cause disasters* in the city. Those who know the way will come to the front and we will reach the beach."

"And for your safety, *don't hurt anyone*, not even tamers," Dixie continued. "If someone interrupts your way, you just push it and that's it. Oh, and don't forget to help the zoo animals out too. And try to stay together."

The first number that night was going to be Diddy's, so some employees entered the dressing room to take him out to the stage.

"When I'll give you the signal, everyone comes out!" Diddy told the animals as he was being moved by the employees, who only heard him emit monkey murmurs for their language.

Dixie began to reopen all the cages with the keys. Meanwhile, Diddy was coming out in front of the audience, although to tell the truth, no one showed any interest in the performance. All the emotion of the public had been extinguished from one moment to another after that photographic exhibition that had left them all shocked.

"Monstrous!" "Abusers!" "Wretches!" shouted the audience against the tamers, who tried to ignore and continue with the show.

"Blast!" Who took those pictures?" grumbled the one-eyed tamer with the other two men, holding back in anger.

Diddy was in the middle of the stage. The people no longer greeted him this time with loud applause, but instead looked at him with compassion as if he were a helpless creature. Diddy should be ready to start his number, but instead, he started taking off all his circus props that had been put on him.

"NOW! EVERYONE COMES OUT!" Diddy shouted forcefully as a signal to the animals.

"It's time! Let's get out, let's get out!" said one of the animals getting out of his cage.

As soon as they heard Diddy's signal, all the animals began to emerge from their cages and, with a little pause behind the curtain, peered out. Until finally, they plucked up the courage and began to run towards the stage, being in view of the public.

"But what the heck is everyone doing out?!" exclaimed the shocked tamers when they suddenly saw all their circus animals together.

The public at first seemed to believe that it would be a colossal group performance of all the animals... But instantly, they began to scream in terror when the animals began to roar and growl wildly towards everyone, especially their tamers.

"What the heck?!" exclaimed the one-eyed tamer.

"STAY STILL! STAY STILL ALL OF YOU!" The tamers ordered them, drawing out their whips and trying to whip them.

But with an entire herd of wild animals, even the tamers were intimidated when they intimidated them as if they wanted to kill them, so they only ran in terror as well.

Successively and at the same time hurriedly, the people began to get down from the stands all terrified, and ran out of the circus, screaming with all the panic like if fleeing from some monster or a catastrophe.

"*Take the weapons!*" the one-eyed tamer ordered the employees, although they too were running to the outside in alarm. "*Argh! Something has to be done!*"

The animals were scaring away the whole crowd and, when there were fewer people, they began to get out of the circus, even though the front door was somewhat narrow for everyone. Diddy went to the front with them to guide them; they were heading first to the zoo to release the animals there as well. Meanwhile, the people who were still present inside the zoo field, ran in terror to see a huge herd of loose animals heading outside.

The three tamers drew their guns and pointed at the animals that were still inside the place, but unfortunately for them, and for the fortune of the animals, the weapons didn't fire at all... since previously, Diddy had removed the magazines from all the guns. The tamers were completely irritated at all the things that were going on.

"*What's wrong with these stupid guns?!*" complained the tamers, smashing their weapons on the ground.

"The real question is: *Who left the stupid cages open?!*"

On the other hand, Dixie was still in the dressing room finishing releasing a few animals that had been locked inside their cages. After that, she noticed that none were missing, and immediately came out to stage to continue with the escape.

There were almost no people anymore, since they had gone outside fleeing from there. From one moment to the next, the circus performance had become a terror for people and a massive escape for animals.

Dixie was running towards the exit in a hurry... When suddenly, someone grabbed her by the sides of her torso abruptly and lifted her up.

"Wait a minute!... *I know you!*"

When she turned around, it was the one-eyed tamer who was holding her. Dixie could have acted defensive instantly, if not for the fact that instead... she was all paralyzed when she looked more closely at the tamer's face... Now he seemed *so... so well known* to her.

"It can't be, is it *the chimpanzee?*" exclaimed the one-eyed tamer.

"Look, this little monkey carries the keys!" exclaimed the one-armed tamer. "*She set them free!*"

"And look at her eyes of that shade of green," added the prosthetic leg tamer, smiling at the sight of Dixie's eyes. "Just what we need!"

"Don't you recognize her?!" replied the one-eyed tamer. "This is *the same* one we tried to capture a few years ago with the other little blonde chimpanzee and a baby gorilla!"

Dixie clearly felt her pulse and circulation at her feet quicken upon hearing that revelation that would confirm what she had been thinking since she saw the tamers the first day she arrived. She began to tremble and panic, as those disturbing memories came to mind.

"I can't believe it! We have one of the little chimpanzees we've needed for years!" exclaimed the one-armed tamer excitedly.

"Wow, the chimpanzee with blond hair that flies and *cute emerald green eyes*," added the one with the prosthetic leg, staring at her. "By the way, that time I lost my leg and Bill and Bert died!"

"I can't believe it, I can't believe it!" exclaimed the one-eyed man in amazement. "And we thought we'd never see her again--"

Dixie, regaining her senses, slapped the tamer in the face.

"*Oh, no! Watch out for that attitude, little ape!*" the tamer shouted, holding Dixie's hands tightly, before she resisted them. "*Hold her!*"

Dixie tried to kick him, but another tamer grabbed her feet while the other grabbed her hair hard to keep her from moving. Dixie struggled to get out of the three tamers... until the one-eyed tamer received what appeared to be a whiplash from a third one.

"*The monkey!*" exclaimed the three men.

Suddenly, Diddy appeared behind with two whips in hand and in a fighting position.

"*Catch him too!*" ordered the one-eyed tamer.

While holding Dixie, one of the tamers rushed to catch Diddy, but he instantly dodged it, jumped towards the three men and began attacking them until they released Dixie. The tamers tried to stop him, but he was very agile, defending himself with whips and trampling their faces with his feet. In their attempt to catch Diddy, the tamers released Dixie; she was also going to fight them, but Diddy took her arm and picked up her backpack which was lying on the ground.

"*Come, let's get out of here!*" Diddy said to Dixie desperately.

"*NO! DON'T LET THEM ESCAPE!*" shouted the one-eyed tamer. "*Catch that pair!*"

Diddy and Dixie sped away from the circus, with the three tamers running after them. Outside it could see some of the circus animals running, and others breaking down the barriers in the corners of the zoo animals so they could get out too; apparently, it wasn't complicated, since the animals were strong enough to knock down a glass or bars, just as the zoo animals left their spaces without hesitation. There were employees of the zoo who tried to stop all the animals, but the latter joined forces to avoid them and get them out of their way, trying not to harm them further. Many of the animals that were bigger, helped others that were small, carrying them on their backs. The exit from the zoo to the city was very congested at first, but then, among all the animals, they broke through and knocked down much of the main entrance.

Meanwhile, Diddy and Dixie continued to be pursued by the trio of tamers, as they had found out that the two little kongs had been the authors of the massive escape of their animals.

"Over here, quick!" Diddy pointed to Dixie when he located a good hiding place to divert the tamers.

Both entered through one of the spaces of the zoo until they reached a small corner between some plants. Due to the small size of the two of them, the tamers failed to reach them and lost sight.

The two were exhausted, trying to recover energy so that they could continue together with the rest of the animals.

"Did you manage to free everyone, Dixie?" Diddy asked.

"Y-yes..." Dixie replied, trembling and looking almost lost, which made Diddy notice her unusual expression.

"Is something going on?"

"It's that... those tamers..." she replied slowly. "They are the ones who... they tried to kidnap Tiny, Kiddy and me a few years ago... It's them!"

"*W-what?!*" Diddy exclaimed, shocked at what she was saying. "What are you talking about?! Are you sure?"

"Yes, even they said it when they caught me! In fact, since I arrived here, they seemed to be known to me but I wasn't so sure."

"So, they are those hunters?!... Say what? What does it mean that they are them, Dixie?!"

Dixie was invaded again by those bitter memories where, some years ago, she was about to be captured along with her sister and cousin, and where her parents tried to rescue them, but unfortunately, those hunters, now circus tamers, ended up with them. Dixie, although with the arrival on DK Island had managed to stabilize a little, at that moment began to be filled again with that deep hatred and resentment towards those tamers and tears in her eyes at the same time.

"Oh, no, no, Dixie!" Diddy said, trying to calm her down, since he didn't like her feeling that way when they touched that topic either.

"I..." Dixie said before giving a heavy sigh. "I withdraw what I said! I'm going to finish them off now!" she added, coming out of hiding, walking firmly and with all the desire to fight.

"What?! No, no, Dixie!" Diddy exclaimed, trying to stop her. "You won't go and face those three right now, will you?! *They are dangerous!*"

"*I don't care! They're going to pay me for what they did to us!*" she cried out through tears. "*They will regret existing those monstrous ones!*"

"*But you'll get hurt or worse!*"

Dixie started running in the opposite direction, looking again for the three tamers. She had enough anger and all the desire in the world to face them until she couldn't, no matter how little physical strength she had compared to those three ones. She never imagined that she would be so close again to those hunters, who had taken an important part of her life from her and her sister.

Diddy ran after her with utmost concern, as he knew that facing three human persons was a difficult thing for someone small; even he was afraid. Later, he managed to catch up with Dixie in time and grabbed her arm.

"Hey! "

"No, Dixie! It's very dangerous!" Diddy exclaimed desperately. "How about if they carry some other hidden weapon?!"

"But you don't understand!" Dixie replied, letting go.

"I do understand, I would do the same in your place, but not now!" he exclaimed, placing his hands on her shoulders. "Just look, you were almost completely caught recently, even I was afraid to face them to let go. They are evil humans... very evil!"

Dixie was silent for a few seconds before she let go of her tears again and broke down like a little girl. Diddy was also sad to see her like this; he didn't like it when she remembered any of her tragic events in that way.

"Oh, Dixie..." he said, hugging her with compassion as she continued to cry and sob continuously. Then, he placed his hands on her shoulders to speak to. "Look, we freed their animals and made them look bad in front of the public, we got them into trouble... It's not better to see them *suffer live*?" he added, trying to cheer her up, but even so, it didn't seem to work out, since Diddy didn't know exactly how to do it either, so he only did what he could. "Well, we have to get out of here with the others. And it's okay, you can let off steam if you want-"

"There are the monkeys! "

They both turned and saw the trio of tamers running after them again and getting closer and closer.

"Oh, no! Let's run, let's run!" Diddy exclaimed, holding Dixie's hand, before running away again.

"Don't move!" exclaimed the three men.

As they ran, the one-eyed tamer suddenly pulled out a weapon and pointed it at them. Diddy and Dixie were hoping it wouldn't fire, but unfortunately, several rounds of ammunition started firing near them... Luckily, they were just from tranquilizer darts.

"Argh!" Dixie exclaimed when, suddenly, she was hit in the foot by one of the darts and tripped.

Instantly, and out of survival instinct, Diddy removed the dart from Dixie immediately.

"Dixie! Are you ok?" he asked her, helping her up.

"We already have you, little monkeys!"

The trio of tamers caught them both. But this time, both didn't sit still and began to attack them defensively, especially Dixie, who now had the opportunity to have them close; she didn't show mercy to them and attacked at the point of slaps, scratches and trampled on their faces to block their view, even attacked them with her hair; she felt that she was finally able to vent all her pain and anger against them.

But several seconds later, Dixie began to feel like she was losing strength and was getting dizzy, at the same time her eyes were closing, until she fell to the ground completely.

"Dixie!" Diddy exclaimed and panicked as he continued to fight the three.

"Look, it already worked on the chimpanzee!" one of the men said as he tried to free himself from Diddy.

The three of them grabbed Diddy's limbs and mercilessly threw him a few meters away as if he were an object. Then, they headed towards Dixie and picked her up from the ground. Diddy immediately got up and ran back to them, got behind the tamer of the prosthetic leg and, with all his strength, pulled that leg and tore it off, causing him to lose his balance and fall.

"Hey, little insolent monkey!" the man yelled at Diddy.

Diddy, with a little difficulty lifting the prosthetic leg, began to attack the other two by hitting them with it, while the fallen tamer could no longer get up well. Diddy kept them that way until, with the same prosthetic leg, he hit hard the only full arm that the one-armed tamer had, and then hit the patched eye of the other tamer; with that, both tamers complained of pain and could not continue. Meanwhile, Diddy went to Dixie, who was lying on the ground with her eyes half-open.

"Dixie, Dixie, are you okay?! We have to get out of here!" he said, desperately pushing her to react. "Tell me something!"

"What... happened?" Dixie asked weakly as she tried to regain her senses.

"Come, get on my shoulders."

Diddy helped Dixie up so that she climbed onto his shoulders, and they also picked up her backpack again. Then, Diddy ran out of there with Dixie on his back, leaving behind the three tamers, who at a long distance still wanted to catch them.

When they managed to leave the zoo, they saw that everything was deteriorated and the entrance of the zoo was collapsed. There were no animals inside anymore, let alone people, except for the tamers.

Diddy along with Dixie ran to another hiding place, this time outside, in the city. Both stopped in some rubble at the entrance of the zoo. Dixie sat down to take a break while she recovered better; apparently, the tranquilizer that the tamers had shot at her had taken effect, but fortunately, Diddy had managed to remove the dart in time before it took full effect and she fell asleep.

"Are you feeling well?" Diddy asked her, worried about.

"Yes... I just feel a little tired," Dixie replied with hectic breathing. "Do... you gave their comeuppance to... those monstrous ones?"

"Well, I can tell you that I took out that fake leg from one of them and attacked them with it," Diddy replied with a smile. "Oh, yes, and I hit one in the arm and the other in the eye. I don't think we'll have to worry about them anymore."

"You're amazing," Dixie said, smiling back and regaining some strength. "Well... Let's see how the other animals go."

"Surely they must already be halfway there," Diddy surmised as he looked out over town. "Can you get up?"

Dixie managed to recover after a couple of minutes and got up. Afterwards, both got out to the city to see where the other animals were, since they had lost sight of them.

But when they arrived... all they could see was a city full of chaos, with people screaming and running all terrified, cars roiled and piled up, broken glass, objects thrown and, of course, animals running around, while people tried to get them away. Diddy and Dixie were left paralyzed watching their plan had turned into a mess, something they didn't want to happen.

"Uhh... This was to be expected... wasn't it?" said Diddy with a forced smile.

"I suppose," Dixie added with the same expression.

"Diddy! Dixie! Good thing I found you!" an elephant exclaimed, arriving in despair. "W-well, everything was going well, until we got out into city and, and, and nobody knows the way and... no one wants to listen and-"

"Wait, wait, wait, and those who went in front didn't say they knew how to get to the beach?!" Diddy said, trying to stay calm.

"Yes, but no one paid attention to them!" the elephant replied desperately. "And not to mention those at the zoo; they are crazy and think this is a game. And now look at the city!"

"Ugh, they were right to say that this would cause a disaster!" Dixie said frustrated.

"No, don't worry, we'll figure it out," Diddy said before thinking about it for a few seconds. "I got it! What if we climb a building and see where the way is?"

"Good idea!" Dixie replied thoughtfully.

Suddenly, gunshots began to be heard throughout the place; they came from uniformed and well-equipped men who carried guns pointed at the animals, but apparently, they were tranquilizer darts.

"Oh, no, let's go fast!" Dixie exclaimed.

"Tell the other animals to snatch the weapons from those men while we go to find the way," Diddy said quickly to the elephant before leaving with Dixie. Then, he pointed in one direction. "That building looks fine!"

Immediately, Diddy and Dixie sped towards the first tall building they spotted. They had to cross several obstacles such as: people throwing objects or running, big animals, crossing the streets where a couple of times they avoided being hit by vehicles, as well as police officers shooting tranquilizer darts everywhere.

"Is it easy to go up?" Diddy asked, looking at the tall building.

"It's almost like climbing a tree or climbing a mountain."

The pair of kongs began to climb the entire building just like Dixie did upon arriving in the city. It didn't take so many minutes, as they were both agile. Upon arrival, they began to observe in detail and quickly at the same time, towards the whole city to find the way to the beach where they could escape.

"Wow, I hadn't seen all this from so high!" Diddy said, smiling in admiration of seeing the city. "I wish I could explore everything no matter the people."

"You're right, and it looks prettier at night," Dixie added in the same tone. Then, they were able to locate the area where everyone could escape. "Look, there's the beach! They have to go there and then walk left to those trees."

"It looks like a good place for everyone to leave. Let's tell them!"

Diddy and Dixie had found the right way and prepared to get off the building... But suddenly, they were interrupted by a thunderous sound that was getting louder and louder. Just as they looked up,

they realized that it was a helicopter flying over the building and, instantly, a large sack fell on them and made it difficult for them to move. Human voices were heard approaching and then wrapped them in the sack.

"We have the monkeys!" clearly, it was the voice of one of the tamers, who apparently began to lift them and move them into the sack.

Diddy and Dixie struggled to get out of the sack, but it was very resistant. Then, they felt that they had been left on the ground, but suddenly, they began to feel as if they were getting up with that same ground, at the same time that the voices of the men were heard more closely.

Meanwhile, the city remained in chaos. A massive number of animals ran everywhere: those from the circus tried to stay calm, but those from the zoo had no idea what to do. Some animals had been sedated by the security agents, but were helped by the other animals, as well as trying to snatch the weapons from those agents.

On the other hand, Diddy and Dixie were still trying to get out of the narrow sack they had been put in. With a little time and effort, they were getting it, until they finally succeeded. When they looked outside, they realized they were *inside the helicopter*. There were only two of the tamers: the one-eyed and the one-armed. Looking out the windows of the helicopter, they could see that they were flying over the city and seemed to be heading back towards the zoo.

"How will we get out of here?" Dixie whispered desperately.

"I don't know..." Diddy replied in the same tone.

"The monkeys! "

Unfortunately, they had been captured by the two tamers, who took some weapons they were carrying, to point at them both.

Diddy and Dixie acted on instinct instantly and pounced straight at the tamers, then began attacking them like the wild animals they should be in a situation like that. They held the weapons of the men with strength so that they wouldn't shoot and, in an attempt to snatch it, Dixie accidentally pressed a button on the helicopter, which opened the doors of it. A strong wind raced and staggered the helicopter to tilt it a little. The one-armed tamer had lost his balance and slipped, hanging from the floor of the helicopter with his only hand he had. Diddy, Dixie and the one-eyed tamer held on to the seats so as not to fall.

"These insolent monkeys!" shouted the one-eyed tamer, before speaking to the other man. *"Brett, hold on!"*

"I can't! Heck!" replied the other man, making an effort to hold on. *"Help me, Brand!"*

Dixie, acting faster, took one of the guns that had become stuck on the floor, and threw it at the tamer who was hanging from the edge of the helicopter; with that, the man screamed from the impact and was letting go until he fell completely towards nothingness.

"BRETT!" yelled the one-eyed tamer after seeing what had happened. Then, he looked very furious at Diddy and Dixie. *"THESE STUPID MONKEYS!"*

The helicopter straightened up, and the one-eyed tamer immediately got up to take both kongs. Anyway, Diddy and Dixie rushed to continue attacking him defensively: they grabbed him by his head and smashed him into the helicopter's control machine. Then, they both stood on his back and took his arms pulling them back.

"This trick was taught to me by those four fools from school!" Diddy said as he took back both of the man's arms and tried to bend them to crush.

"AR GHHH, LOUSY MONKEYS!"

Dixie, on the other hand, held the tamer by the feet and bent his legs upwards as much as she could until he felt cramps.

The tamer screamed in pain while both kongs held him as if in a game of struggles, but then, he also took strength and untied himself from the two of them, then pushed and lunged at them. But at the same time, Diddy and Dixie pounced on him again. Dixie wrapped her hair around his neck, and he was repeatedly slammed into the helicopter machine by both kongs, but this time, the helicopter tilted again. A strong wind ran again, and everyone lost their balance. Dixie, who was holding the one-eyed tamer with her hair, caused him to slip and fall into the void, but instinctively, he grabbed Dixie's hair, causing her to go down as well.

"DIXIE! "

Luckily, Diddy managed to hold her foot. Now the tamer was hanging in the air and holding on to Dixie's hair, as she screamed from pain due to tension. At the same time, Diddy was holding her by the foot, while he was holding on to a helicopter handrail. They stayed like this for a few minutes until they were running out of strength, especially Diddy, who was resisting less and less and letting go of the handrail.

"RESIST! "

Diddy couldn't take it anymore and ended up letting go completely. They almost all fell down, but he managed to hold on to the landing skate with his tail on time. The helicopter had tilted more due to the weight of the three, hanging on the side. The one-eyed tamer screamed in despair as he waved his legs in the air.

"YOU'RE GOING TO PAY ME, LITTLE BRAT MONKEYS! YOU'LL PAY ME!"

Dixie couldn't stand the severe tension in her hair, and in turn cursed the tamer with all the hatred she had for him, even if he didn't understand her language. Then, she took her backpack, which was also hanging in the air, and took out the magazines of the guns that Diddy had extracted, and began to throw them at the tamer with all her strength so that he would lose concentration; with that, he was gradually letting go of Dixie's hair, until seconds later... he fell into the nothingness, followed by screams that were heard lower as he fell.

For Diddy and Dixie, who were still hanging from the helicopter, it was an enormous physical and visual relief to see that cruel hunter-tamer fall from the great height. Both smiled victoriously and celebrated from the position in which they were.

"We did it!" Dixie exclaimed with emotion, waving her arms in the air and upside down.

"We defeated those monsters!" Diddy added in the same tone. But then he realized the position they were in. *"Now what?!"*

"Oh, I don't know!" Dixie replied when she saw that they were hanging without being able to return on top of the helicopter, since it was still flying at speed.

"Oh, no! Look over there!" Diddy pointed in panic to the front.

Dixie looked where Diddy pointed and saw that they were close to crashing into a very tall building. She didn't have much time to think about it, but she came up with something very risky.

"Let go, Diddy! "

"What are you talking about?! Are you crazy?!"

"We'll land well! Trust me! "

Dixie didn't even give him time to think about it, and soared all the way to Diddy's arm, beginning to pull him down hard, while tickling him.

"No, Dixie! What do you do - AAAHHH!"

Both ended up falling into the void as well. Diddy screamed in terror as he clung to Dixie; he thought it would be the end of their lives when they hit the ground. Dixie was panicking too, but she wanted to think that they would manage to have a safe landing. They fell for several seconds until, with a few meters to the ground, Dixie began to spin her hair, and both floated on the short distance to dry land.

Diddy had his heartbeat racing to a thousand, at the same time his face turned to a very pale tone. Dixie looked at him and smiled a little.

"Don't do that again!" Diddy said, trying to regain his calm.

"I told you nothing would happen," Dixie replied with a few small laughs.

"Oh, no, look!" Diddy pointed in one direction suddenly.

Although they had descended, the helicopter was still flying on its own in descent; due to the confrontation with the tamers, they had left it accelerated. This was heading towards a not so tall and illuminated building where it could even see people inside.

"But look at that!" Dixie pointed down the building.

A huge number of animals had piled up under the pointed building, with lions and tigers from the circus on the sides that, seeing the helicopter coming closer, and with the help of elephants, made a great jump into the helicopter to try to slow it down. In turn, the group of elephants had lined up, standing on two legs and, just before the helicopter crashed, they caught it with their legs and trunks, to stop it completely.

"Great!" exclaimed Diddy and Dixie jumping in victory and admiring the act.

The two little kongs ran towards where the animals were gathered. Apparently, things were a little calmer. Upon arriving there, they encountered the entire circus herd.

"We learned this in the circus," commented a lion with a firm attitude.

"Diddy! Dixie! Where were you?" an elephant asked them when he saw them both arrive.

"We were in that helicopter with these monstrous tamers," Diddy replied exhaustedly. "Long explanation."

"And where are those monstrous ones? We want to beat them up, we don't care!"

"Well, they already had it; we made them fall from the helicopter!" Dixie told them with the same exhausted but firm expression. "Or well... only two of them."

"Really? I would have liked to see that!" exclaimed one of the tigers.

"Brat monkeys, you're going to pay me!" said a different voice that didn't come from any of the animals.

Everyone turned and, to bitter surprise, it was... the one-eyed tamer? He was all drenched in water as if he had fallen into a lake, apart from having bruises and wounds from the beatings given to him by Diddy and Dixie. He was also with a face of severe anger and thirst for revenge.

"What?!" exclaimed Diddy and Dixie in shock when they saw that the tamer was still standing after the beating they gave him and the fall to such a considerable height.

"B-b-but...!" Diddy stuttered.

"Don't worry, we'll take over it," said a very angry lion.

The herd of animals joined together and began to intimidate the tamer as if they had an exquisite prey in front of them. The man changed his face completely and now looked terrified and begging for mercy.

"Uhh... You are cute little animals, you know?" said the one-eyed man with a forced smile. "You won't go to kill your beloved tamer who has always taken care of you all, will you?"

"Oh, wow, *'take care of us,'* he says," one tiger said sarcastically. *"Monstrous human beast!"* he exclaimed savagely that, in the ears of the man, they were heard like roars that frightened him.

The animals were on the verge of attacking him, when suddenly, a car with red and blue lights, plus a cell in the back, arrived on the scene. Then, four uniformed and armed men got out. Instantly, the one-eyed tamer headed towards them.

"Ahh, sirs officers, how good that you arrived! You have to help us control these animals and-"

"What animals or anything!" the officer exclaimed, pulling out some handcuffs and placing them on the man's wrists. "We came for *you*, Mr. Brand Owens!"

"What?!" the tamer exclaimed, trying to resist, but the officers stopped him anyway. "Hey, but why?!"

Then, everyone looked towards the car: two people peeked into the cells of the same, they were nothing more and nothing less than the other two tamers of the circus, who had an expression of defeat and as if their fortune had vanished from one moment to another. The one who was one-

armed was also all soaked as if he had fallen into some water fountain; after all, from the helicopter they had fallen into one of the lagoons of the zoo. The one-eyed tamer was shocked and began begging the officers for mercy.

"Wait, wait, wait! You can't take us to-"

"*Messrs. Owens!*" the officers exclaimed to the three tamers, calling them by their real surname. "You are arrested to preventive detention for infringing the Rules of Care and Welfare of the Wild Animal, as well as for failing to comply with the General Safety Standards of the Zoo, putting the lives of the population at risk. And we have proof!"

"Hey, s-s-sir officer, I can explain, those videos and photos that were seen in today's performance are fake and-"

"Yes, of course, get a lawyer or tell the judge that if you are prosecuted!" interrupted the agent as he took him to the cell along with the other two tamers.

Those agents had arrested the three tamers of the Zoo "Zoovlaki", which produced an enormous visual satisfaction to the animals that were witnessing the moment. Everyone looked at each other with an air of victory as if they couldn't believe the turn that the situation was taking, while the car of the agents began to start.

"They were arrested!" exclaimed a zebra with a look of astonishment along with the other animals. "*They were taken away!*"

"*Those beast ones will be locked up!*" added one of the elephants in the same way.

"So... won't we see them anymore?!" added one of the bears. "*Are they going to be locked up now?!*"

"That's right!" exclaimed the same elephant beginning to show excitement. "Then we won't see them anymore!"

The entire herd, including Diddy and Dixie, gave shouts of excitement and hugged each other as if they were celebrating an important event. Even Dixie felt an enormous satisfaction to see how they had managed to defeat those three tamers who once also hurt her.

"*Yeah! We did it!*" exclaimed one of the animals among the herd.

"Well, I think people aren't going to stop us anymore," Diddy said with a smile, finishing celebrating. "Now we can leave with peace of mind!"

"Now tell *Animal Control* to keep stopping all these animals!" the police officers were heard saying as they drove away.

The herd of animals, along with Diddy and Dixie, stopped their celebration the instant they heard that, as it didn't seem to be favorable to them.

"Hurry up! The beach is to the north!" Diddy said, hurriedly pointing to an address. "There we have to meet. Spread the word to the rest of the animals!"

Immediately, the escape mission continued, and everyone started running again, trying to retake their positions that had been agreed in the beginning. This time, the animals tried not to create

disasters, even though people were again frightened by their presence. The circus animals reported the way to those from the zoo, who were still lost and wandering the streets aimlessly.

Now they were doing things as they had planned. All the animals tried to go in one group; although it was difficult to achieve, they didn't give up. Some animals had to pick up others who were still asleep because of the dose of tranquilizer they had received. Diddy and Dixie went to the front directing them all, sometimes climbing into buildings so as not to lose sight of the right way. People ran in terror or hid in their homes. The Animal Control agents reappeared with sedatives in hand and shot in the direction of the animals, so they had to hide and even disperse to corners of the city while they continued to flee.

They ran for several more minutes, until they began to enter clear places in the city such as highways or esplanades; it was easier to move in those areas and, at that point, all the animals were already gathered. What they had to be careful about was not to collide with vehicles speeding through those areas.

After so much journey of several minutes, and already exhausted... they had arrived at the beach. They ran a few more meters along the sand until everything looked clear enough and with no human presence in sight.

"It seems that we're ready!" Dixie exclaimed to the herd as they slowed their steps. Now we have to see how we'll go--"

Suddenly, thunderous sounds began to be heard in the sky. Looking up... they noticed several helicopters flying nearby above them.

"Oh, no! Watch out!" exclaimed Diddy in despair. *"Everybody, hide among the trees!"*

Then, all the animals proceeded to run in the direction of the wooded area near the beach. Suddenly... other sounds were beginning to emerge continuously. When they looked quickly upwards, they realized that it was some shots that the helicopters were emitting in their direction. Everyone was immediately alarmed, but continued to try to hide among the trees.

"Hide well! Hide!" shouted Dixie in despair. *"Be careful!"*

The herd of animals continued to run to hide from the sight of those helicopters, which seemed to be dropping a type of smoke bomb. None of them knew or wanted to know what it would be, so they just ran away and hid.

They were arriving in an area with few trees and where they were approaching the sea, so they began to stop when they were running out of routes. By that point, the helicopters seemed to have slowed down their firing attempts, which gave the herd some time to stop and think about what they would proceed to do next. Everyone was tense and looked everywhere continuously.

"Let's go to the sea!" one of the elephants exclaimed. "What could happen?!"

"Are you crazy?!" one of the lions replied, alarmed. "How are we going to go by sea?!"

"It's the only alternative!" replied the elephant. "If we continue here in this city, we'll be dead. We have to go to the sea; there we'll find some other solid land!"

"I agree!" a hippopotamus replied. "The truth is that there is no way out here! If you want, the bigger ones will carry the smaller ones on our backs!"

"We'll take the two monkeys too," said a gorilla, referring to Diddy and Dixie.

"Oh, we thank you," Dixie replied hurriedly. "B-But we have to return to our island."

"Yes, I'm sure the ones there are waiting for us and they must be very worried," Diddy added.

Suddenly, the helicopters rang closer again, immediately alarming the entire herd. Bomb fire reappeared, forcing everyone to move around without being able to think about it any longer.

"There is no time! Let's go to sea!" exclaimed one of the animals. *"Run!"*

Without discussing anything else, the herd of animals simply took that last alternative and continued on their way to escape. This time, they tried to deviate between the trees so that they could mislead the helicopters a little. In the middle of the escape, Diddy and Dixie paused for a while to think about what the two of them would do; both could not continue to accompany the animals, as they could not lose their way to DK Island.

"What's wrong with you?!" one of the elephants asked Diddy and Dixie, stopping with them and a few other animals. "Why don't you come?!"

"I-it's that... we have to go in a different direction," Diddy replied with concern. "We can't go with you."

"Oh, right, you have a fixed destination island," said the elephant, before looking at the rest of the runaway herd, and then looking at them both again. "Or you just go, go back to your island!"

"B-but... what about you all?!" Dixie exclaimed, not knowing what to do. "Where will you go?!"

"Don't worry! We'll be fine!" the elephant exclaimed in an agitated tone. "Or well, I hope... B-but don't worry either; if you want, go your way!... You've already done a lot for us, after all," he finished, smiling a little.

"Yeah, at least those monstrous tamers won't have us anymore," added one of the lions in the same way. "We thank you, seriously."

Diddy and Dixie looked at each other quite worryingly, while looking at the animals. Although they had already managed to free them, it still caused them some uncertainty of not knowing what fate they would all have.

Suddenly, other helicopter booms resounded, preventing them from thinking and giving them no choice but to act quickly.

"Come on, let's get out of here!" exclaimed one of the elephants, pushing everyone to move forward, except for Diddy and Dixie. "Monkeys, you guys just run, don't worry!"

"Or I'll accompany you if you want!" added another of the elephants heading towards Diddy and Dixie. "Come on!"

"Me too!" added one of the lions. "We have to take care of the little monkeys, anyway!"

Diddy and Dixie, unable to do anything else at that moment, deviated from the herd and ran in the opposite direction, where they would be going to the point on the beach where Dixie was when she arrived in that city. A small group of animals joined to accompany them, which consisted of an elephant, a gorilla, a lion and the two small bears, whom they were also protecting.

The helicopters were being heard less and less, and even Diddy and Dixie along with the group of animals were no longer being chased by them. The small group remained hidden under some leafy trees for a while. Meanwhile, Diddy and Dixie gave a last look at the rest of the animals that had chosen to go to the sea, which filled them with concern, but at the same time, they wanted to get the idea that they wouldn't have a bad fate.

"It looks like it's all over," said the elephant stealthily looking up, while they held Diddy and Dixie as if they were protecting defenseless creatures.

"Let's get out of here," the lion added in the same way.

Diddy and Dixie, in the company of the few animals that were with them, walked to a clearer area... Finally, the chase seemed to be over, or at least in that area it could see that. In that area, for some reason, there were remains of wood that appeared to be from old abandoned boats, both large and small.

"What madness," exclaimed one of the bears, showing amazement. "I never thought I'd see this."

"Are we... free?!" added the gorilla in the same way.

"It seems so," replied the elephant with a small smile. But then, he showed concern again. "Uh, now what do we do? L-let's go to the beach or what?"

"Why don't you all go with the others too?" Dixie suggested. "So that you go in the herd and don't get lost."

"We want that, but the truth is... we're also afraid to go into the sea like that," replied the elephant in a fearful tone.

"Or let's take one of these boats," added the gorilla as he rummaged through the rubble. "We can improve them. We can even prepare one for the monkeys."

"It's not a bad idea for now," replied the lion in the same way along with the others. "So, we'll do that, one for ourselves and one for the monkeys."

"Hey, no, don't worry," Diddy said, smiling a little. "We can do it. You just keep on your way; you know that we have another course."

"It'll be quick," said the elephant. "It'll only be a small boat for you. After all... we have no other way to pay you both," he added, ending with a smile at them.

Diddy and Dixie still had doubts about the idea, but they didn't turn it down anyway.

"Well... Okay," they both replied with shrugs and smiling later.

Suddenly, those rumblings coming from the helicopters were heard again, although this time they didn't seem to be close. However, everyone was alert in case they saw something that represented a danger.

"Come on, don't let your guard down," said the elephant, stealthily looking up.

Then, Diddy and Dixie took refuge with the animals that were accompanying them to avoid being spotted by the agents. They went to another point in the area with remains of boats where they stayed a few more minutes, waiting for there to be no danger.

Meanwhile, the big herd of animals that had fled by sea, seemed to have succeeded; none of them could be seen or heard anymore, not even to the helicopters so active in the search.

On the other hand, Diddy and Dixie had stayed with the small group of animals by making some small and quick boats. It didn't take them so long, because they were rather recycled boats, to have something where they could move by sea. The group of animals had told Diddy and Dixie not to worry about helping them, but they both did anyway.

A good while later, the small group of circus animals handed a boat with a pair of oars to Diddy and Dixie; it was enough for both to return. Likewise, they had made some for themselves.

"Take it, little ones," said the gorilla, handing them the boat. "Take it as a thank you gift."

"Thank you!" said the two in unison, smiling at them.

"And well, I guess... you're leaving, right?" the elephant asked them.

The circus animals looked with a little melancholy at the pair of kongs; even though they had shared only three days with them, they seemed to have earned a share of their appreciation. But now, it was time to watch them leave.

"Indeed," Dixie replied.

"Even so... we thank you!" the elephant told them, smiling kindly. "Seriously, this was all thanks to the two of you."

"Yes, if it weren't for you, we'd still be behind those horrible bars," the lion added in the same way. "Your arrival has been the best thing that has happened to us in these last days."

"You're amazing! We'll be forever grateful," said one of the little bears, smiling at them too. "It seems that now... we could be a little calmer. Seriously, we thank you."

"It's nothing," Diddy and Dixie replied, smiling back.

Diddy and Dixie were happy to see them so happy to be free. A few days ago, they didn't imagine that they would manage to free and save a big number of animals from a bad life. It was an unexpected rescue mission, but at the same time very satisfying. After all, something good would have to come out from a bad situation.

"And right, what's going to become of you?" Dixie asked them with some concern.

"We're going to follow the others, they must not be so far away," replied the elephant. "We can go in another of the boats we made. So don't worry."

"Okay, if you guys say so," Diddy added.

"Well... so, I think it's time to leave," Dixie concluded along with Diddy.

"We're going to miss you," said the elephant, looking at them tenderly. "Come here."

Each of the circus animals made some gesture of gratitude to them, and the pair of kongs reciprocated. And, after all the farewell, both left for home. The animals accompanied them to the shore of the beach, right where Dixie had arrived at first, since she had written down the way back on paper.

"Goodbye, little monkeys, take good care of yourselves. We hope to see you again one day."

"Goodbye to you all," Dixie replied, smiling. "I hope things will be well for you from now on."

"And thank you again for the boat," Diddy said likewise. "And I hope you find a good home."

That said, Diddy and Dixie got on the boat and began to enter the sea, giving a last farewell gesture to some of the animals with whom they lived three days in that circus, but at the same time, they were very happy to have saved them from that dreadful place.

"Now... to home," Diddy told Dixie with a smile when they were already sailing. "You know how to get there, right?"

"Yeah," Dixie replied, pulling the paper she had marked the entire route out of her backpack, showing it to Diddy. "The way is almost all straight, it's not difficult. Only the trip will be very long."

The pair of little kongs went much further into the sea; after all the hustle and bustle, they were back home. Diddy had spent five days and Dixie three away from DK Island; they just hoped that the others there weren't thinking that something terrible happened to them or that someone would have taken them away as they thought and, of course, they hoped in the same way that everyone on DK Island was okay...

Chapter 27: Unforeseen Events in the Open Sea

It was late at night and, in the middle of the open sea, there were Diddy and Dixie paddling in the small boat. It had been maybe a couple of hours; they still had a long journey to go to get home. Both were too exhausted, apart from the fact that cold currents of wind were coming around and making them cold. At other times, the sea also had waves that made the boat sway slightly, but they managed to balance it with the help of the oars.

"Don't you want to rest a while better?" Diddy asked Dixie as he rowed exhausted.

"I was going to tell you the same thing," Dixie replied in kind.

They both put their oars on the boat and finally took a break; they had been paddling since they left the city beach.

"Do you know?" Dixie said later. "I was thinking... that if those tamers had managed to capture me that time, surely with Tiny and Kiddy we would be circus animals again... but this time with those appalling mistreatments."

"Oh, no, it would be terrible," Diddy said. "That place was a complete prison; I wouldn't even want to imagine how you would be treated... or who knows what fate you four would have had."

"The good thing is that now *those monstrous ones* will be in prison and pay for the damage they did to us," Dixie added with a little smile of victory, before looking down. "Or at least I want to think that."

"I hope so, those men were monsters with the animals... Geez, although that was the only thing we could do against them."

"I swear I would have liked to keep beating them up, but... nothing more could be done," Dixie added before sighing and lowering her gaze. "But at least something could be done... I'll have to tell this to Tiny, Kiddy and Chunky no matter what."

"I still can't believe we were able to free a bunch of big animals from a circus," Diddy said after a while. "I mean, just look, we were there for a few days and we already got them all out of that horrible place... And it was you who gave the idea."

"I don't even think so, I had only come looking for you and we ended up directing a massive escape," Dixie replied, smiling a little, before pausing. "And I really hope that all those animals reach a good destination."

"Yeah, I also hope they'll reach some mainland or somewhere safer."

They both smiled as they remembered and talked about the whole mission of freeing the animals from the circus and zoo. It made them sad also to remember all the terrible things they had to witness in that place, as well as, they were glad to have rescued all the animals there.

But after a few moments, the topic of the zoo, the circus, the city and the animals was already ending, and there began to be moments of silence. Suddenly, Diddy began to remember the last

matters before leaving DK Island; there were pending things to be talked about, and now there was Dixie in front of him to do it.

"Dixie... I think... all this was my fault," he told her with a low expression. "I shouldn't have gone out to sea at that time of night... Sorry if I made you come looking for me and put yourself in danger too."

Dixie also began to remember the last things that had happened before she had gone looking for Diddy. They had already clarified the matter at the zoo, but now was a better time to explain it well... and even make real peace.

"Hey... it's not your fault," Dixie replied in the same tone. "I mean, you just wanted to go out for a while; those tamers were the ones who captured you," she paused before continuing with what she had to say. "And... *sorry*, Diddy. I already told you: it was Jemky who appeared at that moment and threatened me so that I told you that I didn't want to be your friend anymore, that you were a dumb monkey and that I was dating him. You know I wouldn't have told you that; you are my best friend. And I would have to be crazy to have really dated that burnt hairs."

Diddy stared at her for a few seconds, as he took courage to open the topic again. Really, he didn't feel any discomfort towards her anymore now that everything had cleared up.

"Okay, Dixie," he said, placing a hand on her shoulder and smiling a little. "I forgive you, seriously. And I'm really glad this has at least been fixed."

"Oh, and sorry for taking your pyramid," Dixie added, still embarrassed. "And for having told Mr. Pinky that it was Jemky's. But you know, those four fools threatened me and I was very afraid back then."

"Ah, don't worry about that pyramid anymore," Diddy replied with a shrug. "That can be fixed... And by the way, how did that pyramid matter happen?"

"That was the last time I was going to go with you to the waterfalls. In fact, it was all those four fools who threatened me so that I stole it."

"So, there were also Mandrew, Melenky and Rocky at that time?"

"Yes, they seemed to be organized. After having to tell you all that, along with Jemky, the other three appeared. They were also armed and forced me to take them to your house and take your pyramid at night; they didn't want to let me go until I did. And that the next day, I would not say anything to Mr. Pinky, or else they would attack the whole class at that moment."

"Geez, those fools are completely insane, really," Diddy said in disgust. "Why would they have done that after all?"

"In the end, what they wanted was that emerald I gave you. And Jemky also wanted your pyramid for Mr. Pinky to approve him."

"And what are they supposed to want the emerald for?"

"They didn't want to tell me; I have no idea."

"Ugh! Those stupid guys have nothing else to do," Diddy complained. "What else did those deranged ones do to you?"

"Well, you know: the last day of school, when I left, I confronted Jemky because he didn't want me to rat them out to you, and well... you know what happened."

"Oh, right... that incident happened," Diddy said with some insecurity after returning to the topic.

"Ugh, I don't want to remember," Dixie said, clutching her hands to her temples. "I didn't want to do something like that."

"No, you don't worry. You only fought back, didn't you?" Diddy replied, trying to calm her down. "And if something happened to Jemky... nobody will find you out. We'll solve all this as soon as we arrive."

"Do you think he survived or something?" she asked, looking up again.

"If you gave him just one shot, I would think he did. Where did you shoot him, by the way?"

"In the chest," Dixie replied, making a gesture of discomfort after remembering it.

Diddy made the same gesture to Dixie's response, so he decided to withdraw his words of calm.

"Uh, well... if you shot him there, so--"

"Yes, I know... Maybe he didn't survive. Besides, when he fell off the cliff, was scratching himself with the stones nearby," Dixie said, overwhelmed and putting her hands to her head again. "I can't get out of my mind the image of when I shot him: he had his hand on his chest with that wound... and when he fell into the river, he remained wrapped in leaves while the river current took him away."

There was a moment of silence as Dixie showed her guilty face. Diddy, for his part, wanted to cheer her up not to at least think about it for the time being, even if he also flinched at the story.

"Woah..." Diddy commented rather insecurely after hearing Dixie's story. "H-hey, but let's imagine that he has survived and... I'm sure no one will suspect you," Diddy told him with a forced smile not knowing what to say. Dixie just kept looking at him the same way. "Or well, we'll see what all that turned out to be."

"But you're right," Dixie said before sighing and her eyes lowered. "For now, nothing can be done and we'll have to wait for us to reach DK Island."

"I just hope those fools aren't on the island when we arrive," Diddy said before pausing. "In the meantime, regarding the first topic... it's all fixed, Dixie, and we'll still be friends," he added this time with a sincere smile.

"Aren't you mad at me about the pyramid?" Dixie asked insecurely.

"And why would I be? Now you explained it to me better, Dix. Then we'll talk to Wrinkly when she gets home from vacation or when we meet her there."

Dixie continued to look at him insecurely, but later, she smiled a little as she saw that things had cleared up and now her friendship with Diddy could continue as normal; it was something she at

least needed for days. And, of course, she was happy that she had finally managed to find him; she could not wait more to get back to DK Island with him back. She didn't want to think about any bad events at the moment, so she just smiled again.

"Come here!" she exclaimed as she lunged at him to tickle him.

"Hey, *no!*" replied Diddy trying to pull away and laughing, but tickling back her too.

Then, between the two's play, a piece of paper came out of Diddy's cap... When they looked at it better, they realized it was the broken photo of the two of them. Diddy, embarrassed that Dixie saw it like that, immediately took it and tried to hide it.

"Is it the... photo of the two of us? I have the other half!" Dixie said, taking out of her backpack the other piece of the photo where he appeared. Then, she showed it to him and joined it with the other half.

"What?! But how did you get it?" Diddy asked her, surprised.

"I found it in the jungle while I was searching for you when you disappeared... You broke it, didn't you?"

"W-well... I'm sorry, I was angry, you told me we weren't friends anymore and... Aren't you angry?" he asked when he saw that Dixie was just laughing a little.

"It doesn't matter, we'll take another one, or we'll just stick it again."

Diddy was very relieved now. Things with Dixie had really been fixed; he already missed her very much and really feared that things wouldn't be the same between them anymore.

"By the way, Dixie... I think I didn't tell you, but... thank you for coming for me," he said somewhat shyly. "I didn't think you would. And if you hadn't... I would continue in that terrible circus, locked up and I don't even know with what fate."

"And why did you think I wouldn't, Diddy? I wasn't going to let you be lost forever," she replied, smiling calmly, and then he smiled back.

Then, there was a long time of silence as they continued their journey normally. They just stared around even though there was almost nothing to see: just the sea everywhere and a few islets that could be seen in the darkness of the night.

Dixie was leaning to the side of the boat while looking up at the night sky, and next to her was Diddy, who at times also looked at the sky or the sea, but most of the time... he stared at her and smiled inevitably; Diddy hadn't enjoyed her company like that for days. After a while, Dixie suddenly turned and made eye contact with Diddy, so he immediately looked in another direction. Dixie laughed quietly and tried not to blush at the accidental eye contact, which they had had long before.

While they were side by side, Diddy was placing his hands on the edge of the boat while remaining pensive, but by some involuntary action, and without realizing it, he had placed his hand on Dixie's, making him react immediately as he withdrew it. She noticed that and turned to look at him instantly.

"Uhh... is that a shooting star?" Diddy pointed toward the horizon, not knowing what he had said to divert attention about the involuntary gesture that had just happened.

"Where? I don't see any shooting stars," Dixie replied in confusion as she turned her head to look. "There are no shooting stars on the horizon, Diddy," she added with some little laughs.

"Hey, yes, there it was, I saw it," Diddy added, extending his arm again in the direction indicated... despite realizing the incoherence he said.

"But there is... nothing."

Dixie, turning again, almost bumped her face into Diddy's. Such a fact made the nerves invade her strongly and her heartbeat accelerate instantly, but she tried to hide it.

As if that were not enough, Diddy also reacted to what happened, but his nerves didn't cooperate either. They stared straight into each other's eyes not knowing what to do and, for some reason, couldn't move away. A tension began to appear between both, which prevented them from pretending that nothing was happening. Suddenly, being less than ten centimeters... Dixie got a little closer to Diddy, and he did the same; they didn't know what might happen until, seconds later... their lips had touched each other; they both closed their eyes at the same time in the moment...

But almost instantly, they separated their faces, as they could not believe what was happening, and looked at each other for several seconds, while an intense red color appeared on their faces that even between them two noticed each other. Although it was something very quick and unexpected, it was enough to activate their strong emotions suddenly. After a few seconds of silence, and with her nerves well alive, Dixie smiled shyly at Diddy, making him blush a lot more, but then he smiled back in the same way.

But suddenly, that moment was interrupted when a strong flickering light around the place frightened them... And, a couple of seconds later, rumblings were heard in the sky. Both seemed not to have realized what was happening, but suddenly, it had begun to rain, while the boat began to wobble from top to bottom. In addition, the cold wind that was felt from the beginning, was getting stronger and stronger.

"W-what's going on?" Dixie said in fear and looking around, changing her expression abruptly.

"It's just the weather, I suppose," Diddy replied, trying to stay calm while looking everywhere too. Suddenly, he was astonished at a sudden event and pointed in one direction. "*Watch out!*"

A huge wave was forming in front of them, which was getting bigger every second and was heading in the direction of the boat. Both of them were instantly alarmed, and their survival instinct soon appeared.

"Oh, no! *The oars! Take the oars!*"

Diddy and Dixie took the oars again and tried to divert the boat as fast as they could. Unfortunately, it was clear that the force of the wave was greater and, without any time to avoid, it came over them and made them get out of the boat completely, leaving both submerged in the water.

Diddy immediately swam to the surface again, trying to return to the boat. Suddenly, several wild waves began to appear in different directions and at different heights, making it difficult for Diddy

to see and submerging him again repeatedly.

"DIXIE!" Diddy screamed desperately as he now struggled against the force of the sea.

"DIDDY... OVER HERE!" Dixie appeared in the same situation.

They had located the boat in the distance, but unfortunately, it was being swept away wildly by the waves, until later losing sight of it completely. Diddy swam as fast as he could to where Dixie was until he was along with her again.

"What's going on?!" Dixie exclaimed, panicking.

Both were frightened, since the only thing that could now be seen was an open sea with roiling waves and torrential rain falling, in addition to a wind sweeping hard. Panic gripped the two of them again, as they didn't even know what was going on and why so suddenly.

"Don't worry, it's j-just the weather!" Diddy said, holding her and trying to be optimistic, even if deep down he was in all the terror he could feel. *"Oh, no!"*

As if that were not enough, a great wave of the apparent size of a building was forming in front of them, which little by little was taking on a colossal appearance... At that time, the two little kongs didn't know what else to do.

"OH, NO, LET'S GO, LET'S G-"

Without giving them more time to escape or say another word, the wild wave caught them both completely and clouded all their vision...

Chapter 28: Back... home?

On a deserted beach, and in the wee hours of the morning, several waves collided strongly with each other, at the same time as they went towards the open sea and returned to the sand. Several waves passed later, when suddenly, a little monkey with a cap and red shirt, apparently unconscious, was swept away by the waves towards the firm sand. Minutes later, the monkey lying in the sand, began to open his eyes before another small wave passed over him and woke him up suddenly. He began to cough repeatedly until he was completely recovered. Suddenly, he recovered all his senses and stopped to observe better where he was; it was clear that he was on an island. He almost smiled for having survived that storm and reached dry land... until he realized that *someone else* was missing from the scene.

"Dixie!" Diddy exclaimed in panic when he noticed that she was not present. "Oh, no, no, no!"

Diddy moved desperately around the seashore as he tried to locate Dixie and shouted her name. Until it happened a couple of minutes later, when the waves came dragging a little chimpanzee with blond hair and pink clothes. Diddy, sighing with relief, immediately ran and swam to her and took her towards the sand. She was also unconscious, until she slowly opened her eyes and began to cough.

"Are you okay, Dixie?!" he asked her as he held her on the sand.

"Yes... But..." she replied with difficulty, beginning to get up. "What happened?... Have *we already arrived?*"

Diddy looked everywhere. The place where they were gave the appearance of being an island, so he clung to the idea that they would be on a beach on DK Island.

"Well... I guess so. I think I remember this beach," Diddy said with a forced smile. "Ah, yeah! Of course, I remember it, I think we used to come to this beach, do you remember?"

Dixie fully regained her senses and got up to inspect... But by observing the surroundings carefully, she could see something not so good.

"Diddy..." Dixie said quietly as she looked clearly everywhere. "This is *not* DK Island."

"What do you say? Of course this is DK Island," Diddy replied, ignoring Dixie's guess. "Look, there are beaches... and those palm trees with coconuts... Oh, and look at all that pile of trees. It's clear that those things are from DK Island."

Dixie gave him a look of strangeness. Then, she went to one of the tallest trees in sight and then began to climb to the top. Diddy went to follow her and also climbed up. When they reached the top, they only saw a massive amount of trees, the rest of the long beach, plus endless hills... They didn't see any particular trace of DK Island, in addition that it was almost all dark due to the night.

"Uhh... well, DK Island also had places like that and... maybe we are in another area."

They both stared around... which was dark and with no sign of showing exactly where they were.

"Oh, no, no, Diddy! We got lost, realize it!" Dixie exclaimed, beginning to despair. "T-that storm swept us away, our boat got lost, we landed in this unknown place and no trace of DK Island is seen!"

"Oh, I know! I was just trying to be positive," Diddy replied, before stopping to look around again. "But don't worry, we'll surely find a way out of here... I don't think we're that far away; we'd already been traveling on that boat for a long time."

Both kongs came down from the tree and went towards the shores of the beach. They looked in more detail everywhere, but before long, the two were overcome with anguish and despair... *They definitely seemed to have gotten lost.* That storm and the strong waves had swept them to an island that neither of them knew what it was. The last hope they would have was that maybe that was DK Island, but due to the darkness, they could not check it.

"Oh, no, no, no! Now what do we do?!" exclaimed Diddy, desperate and already aware of the situation they were in. "W-what place is this?!"

"Well... let's look around if just in case DK Island is nearby," Dixie replied with insecurity. "Who knows, maybe we're not as far away as you said."

"But it's all very dark," Diddy said frightenedly.

"I know, but we can't stay here and do nothing either."

The two began to walk around the beach, looking for some clue as to where they might be and, above all, where DK Island might be. Later, they entered the tree area. Due to the darkness of the night, it was difficult to see when they were walking on the ground, so they had to go over the tops of the trees. It was maybe almost an hour as they jumped from tree to tree and sneaked through the vegetation quickly. Sometimes, they were about to fall to the ground due to darkness, and in turn they collided with a few branches. Even so... they failed to find *anything* known to them about DK Island.

When they were tired, and with lower hopes of locating DK Island, they only returned to the beach where they had originally arrived. They sat on the sand, frustrated that they had failed on their journey home. They had waited so long to get out of the zoo only to end up on another island that was quite likely not DK Island.

"Oh, no! This can't be happening, I don't want to stay on an island far from home," Diddy said, throwing his cap to the ground.

"All that trip was for nothing!" Dixie added in the same tone. "I even had written down the way back."

"Wait... And don't you have it yet?"

"Everything got lost at sea," Dixie replied in frustration. "Stupid storm!"

"Geez!" Diddy exclaimed in the same way as he picked up his cap. "Now what?"

Both stood for a while doing nothing and in silence; there was nothing else they could do at the moment; they were only surrounded by an extensive beach and a wooded area behind. A few minutes later, sleep and fatigue were also taking over the two, since in the last few days they had

not had the best rests, but in turn, the worry of having gotten lost also overwhelmed them. They both leaned close to each other as they struggled not to close their eyes, until Dixie reacted again and regained her senses.

"No, we can't sleep here," Dixie said, trying to stay awake as she dozed along with Diddy.

"I know, but it's all I want to do now," Diddy replied with narrowed eyes. "What if we better sleep and tomorrow in the daytime we look for DK Island? It may even be in sight right now, but since it's night we can't see it."

"But... what if while we sleep a giant beast comes and catches us?" she added with some fear.

"Well, there is no one seen around here; it's very quiet," Diddy added, looking around. "Oh, but where will we sleep?"

Dixie thought about it for a while, but deep down she also wanted to sleep and knew that they couldn't do anything else for the time being, so then she agreed.

"Well... what if we build some sleeping places?" Dixie proposed. "Something like shelters".

"And how can we do that?" Diddy asked, still with narrow eyes.

"It's not so difficult," Dixie replied as she got up again. "Come, let's find a good corner to sleep."

Diddy, although too tired, agreed to accompany Dixie. Both walked another while more until they found a corner where they could sleep. They tried not to go that far and stayed in a not so dark place with enough tall vegetation around to stay hidden and shaded.

"I think it doesn't look so bad here," Dixie said, looking around cautiously. "What do you say?"

"Not bad to replenish energy," Diddy replied with a shrug. "And how is it that a shelter is made?"

"Well, we just need a few branches and leaves, that's all... And here there seem to be many. First, we must light a campfire."

Dixie set out to look for a few small branches, in addition to a few coconut shells. It was not so complicated, since it was what was most in that place. She asked Diddy for help in holding the branches, and then began rubbing them against each other and smoke sparks began to come out later. After that, Dixie took the coconut shell and placed it on the source of smoke that, with the help of a few blows, began to generate a flame, which scared Diddy at first, but helped them to have more lighting around.

"Now, we can build our sleeping shelters," Dixie said.

They both began to look for more branches and fallen leaves as Dixie had said. This time, they had to be larger branches, which were also not that far away. Then, Dixie began to build these sleeping shelters, also giving instructions to Diddy, who between moments gave looks of surprise at what they were doing. The procedure consisted of placing several branches inclined and grouped together, achieving a tent shape, which they covered with several leaves later.

"Where did you learn this from?" Diddy asked Dixie as they finished laying the leaves.

"We learned it with Tiny, Kiddy and Chunky when we were fugitives," she replied, placing one last pile of leaves and shaking her hands. "Well, I think it's ready."

"Wow, they don't look so bad," Diddy said, looking again at the pair of shelters they had built. "Okay, I guess we can rest."

Both proceeded to go to the temporary sleeping shelters, one in each. They had not been able to rest comfortably for days, so as soon as they each lay down in their position, they fell to sleep.

"Uhh, Diddy... are you sure nothing will happen around here while we sleep?" Dixie asked, still afraid and getting up a little again.

"Yes, don't worry. If it was dangerous something would have caught us by now," Diddy replied before turning to lie down at his position. "Rest well, Dix."

"Okay... Rest too."

Dixie also turned to the other side and tried to sleep, but she couldn't get it easily because of the worry she now had. She couldn't believe that she had tried so hard to find Diddy, she even had the way back written down, only to be surprised by a wild swell that swept them to an unknown island that who knows what it was. Although after all, she remembered that this was also the case with her sister and cousins in the time they fled from the group of evil apes that pursued them. She was even regretting telling Enguarde to return to DK Island and that she and Diddy would be able to return safely. The only thing that managed to make Dixie at least a little smile was when she remembered the last thing that had happened before that storm interrupted their trip... She blushed as she remembered that moment with Diddy; she didn't expect that to happen.

On the other hand, Diddy, still trying to sleep and with the unknown of having landed on that island, was thinking the same. He smiled and gave inner screams of excitement as he remembered the little kiss he had had with Dixie before they were swept away by the swells. It was the first time he had kissed someone and, best of all, it had been with the girl he loved so much and, at the same time, he also cursed the weather phenomenon for having ruined the moment, and even wondered if that had been okay. But in the middle of it all... his excitement faded when he realized that both had tried to escape from the zoo, save a massive number of animals and try to return home, only to end up getting lost. Diddy also felt deeply guilty for having gone out to sea that night; he knew they would still be calm on DK Island if he hadn't. He was also thinking of Donkey; he knew that he might be too worried, and he just hoped he could see him again as soon as possible, and that he wasn't thinking that a thief had taken him, as Dixie had told him.

After so many thoughts, both kongs fell asleep deeply, hoping that the next day they could continue their search for DK Island and find it. After all, it was the only thing left for them to do... Who knows, and in the end, they would be nearby DK Island.

Chapter 29: An Unknown Place

"Would we wake them up?"

"No, no, leave them alone- Wait! They are waking up."

Diddy and Dixie began to open their eyes because of the bright midday light reflected through the holes in their sleeping shelters, and also the murmurs of several voices that could be heard nearby. They both got up before giving one last yawn and rubbing their eyes. Upon fully waking up, they uttered a shout of astonishment as they saw a whole massive group of known faces surrounding them, as if it were a group of curious people watching an accident.

"Hi, little monkeys! We met again."

"Say what?!" Diddy exclaimed in shock. "W-What are you doing here?"

"How... did you get here?" Dixie asked in the same expression. "How did you find us?!"

"Well, while we were into the sea, the current brought us here," an elephant replied. "The question would be: how did *you* get here?... Didn't you go to your island?"

Diddy and Dixie finished getting up quickly and left their positions completely to get a better look at those ones. In fact, it was the great herd of the same animals *of the circus*, now also accompanied by those of the zoo and other animals never seen before. Diddy and Dixie looked at each other stunned by the unexpected reunion, because they never expected to coincide with them right in the same place.

"Do you live here too?" the animals asked the two of them between murmurs.

"So, you're the one who freed everyone from the circus?" asked the animals that went from the zoo.

"Did you come to visit us or were you following us?"

"No, no, no, I can explain!" Diddy replied, calming them all down. "Well, we were going home on that boat, but then giant waves swept us here... and we don't know where we are now."

"By the way, does anyone know DK Island?" Dixie asked them quickly. "Or is it at least nearby here?"

"DK Island, huh?" a lion said pensively.

The animals looked at each other and muttered in case anyone knew... But none seemed to have the answer they needed, not even the unknown animals that seemed to be from that new island had an answer.

"Sorry, little monkeys," a gorilla said in a compassionate tone. "It seems that nobody knows about that island... Huh, but don't worry, this island seems to be nice."

Diddy and Dixie were disappointed upon seeing that no one could help them find their way home, to which the rest of the animals looked at them with some pity and kept muttering.

"But... nobody really knows?" Diddy asked them again. "Haven't you heard of DK Island?"

"I didn't know it, I didn't even know it existed," replied a rhino.

"Me neither, I've never heard it," added a zebra in the same way.

"It sounds familiar to me but I'm not so sure," said one of the tigers.

The animals began to mumble with similar responses, which only increased concern in Diddy and Dixie. Both didn't want to get the idea that they wouldn't return to DK Island easily and would have a new inconvenience now.

"Uh, so, what do we do?" Diddy asked Dixie in a lower voice.

"Oh, I don't know, we didn't expect this," Dixie replied with too much concern as they continued to look at the murmuring animals.

"We're really sorry, little monkeys," said one of the elephants. "Although you can stay here with us; everything is quiet."

"Well, how have you been, by the way?" Dixie asked, trying to break the thread of the conversation. "Were you swept away by the waves?"

"Not exactly, we just got carried away by the wind and it brought us here," replied a giraffe. "We arrived here almost at dawn. We're not all here; some took different routes, but most of us managed to reach this island."

"But at least we managed to survive, and we're not alone," said an elephant before pointing to the animals unknown to Diddy and Dixie. "We have found more animals on this island."

"There's a big shelter here, and we're staying there!" added one of the little bears of the circus.

"Really? That sounds good," Diddy told them, smiling along with Dixie. "I see that at least you got to a good place."

"Hey, and it was thanks to you," said one of the tigers with emotion. "You delivered us from that dreadful circus!"

"Yeah, it wasn't a bad idea to have made all that escape after all," added one of the elephants in the same way. "And well, uh, is there anything we can do to thank you?"

"Oh, hey, you don't have to worry," Dixie replied, smiling at them. "Now we just have to try to get to DK Island."

"Don't you want something to eat before you continue your search?" suggested an elephant kindly.

"We have a place with a lot of banana trees, they are delicious," added a gorilla who lived on that island. "Oh, yes, and we also have the community shelter, you can come see it if you want."

"Uh... Okay?" Diddy and Dixie nodded after some thought, though not so sure. That surprise of finding them all again had left them astonished, but at least they had found acquaintances and that left them somewhat calm.

"Well, so, let's go," said the same gorilla. "You'll feel like home."

The animals began to signal to Diddy and Dixie, to which they got up completely and agreed to accompany them. Both were still in doubt, but anyway, they also needed to know where they were.

"Wait, what place will that be?" Dixie asked quietly and looking strangely.

"I don't know, but it isn't bad to find out," Diddy whispered. "At least to ask if anyone knows about DK Island."

"Isn't there somewhere strange or something?"

"At least so far nothing strange or threatening is seen. Let's see anyway."

The animals led them along paths that led to a place full of trees with bunches of bananas, those looked so colorful and delicious that the pair of little kongs didn't hesitate for a second to take some after they were offered.

"Take as many as you want, monkeys," said one of the island's gorillas, handing them a few bananas.

Diddy and Dixie were so hungry that they each even carried more than five bananas; they had also not eaten well in recent days and, fortunately, those bananas seemed to be of good quality. Both thanked the gorilla for the small snack.

Later, a group of tall and strong gorillas of different characteristics appeared, who lived on that island, with apparent adult ages between males and females. Diddy and Dixie looked at them strangely and somewhat fearfully upon seeing them, due to their authoritarian aspects. But later, those apes greeted them with all kindness.

"Are you the new ones here, little ones?" one of those big gorillas asked them.

"Uhh... yes?" Diddy replied with some insecurity.

"Well, come this way," said another of the apes, inviting them to follow them. "In this place you can take refuge temporarily until you find your old homes or a new home."

"Uhh, excuse me," Dixie said a little shyly. "Is this a... shelter or something?"

"Yes, of course," replied one of those gorillas kindly. "Come, let's show you."

Both, somewhat doubtful at the beginning of the invitation, accessed the indicated place and entered by another short path. Upon entering through curtains of leaves, they realized that the place was the aforementioned community shelter. This one had a nice appearance, was all surrounded by trees, was too wide and had several corners full of leaves and tree houses for the animals to take a break, as well as, there were small lagoons for animals that rested in areas like those. Circus and zoo animals were scattered throughout the site, as if each group had a resting stand. A minute later, they all gathered in the center where there was a table full of food.

"Come too, little ones. You're welcome here," another gorilla from that group said kindly to Diddy and Dixie.

"Well... Thank you," Diddy and Dixie replied simultaneously but with some shyness.

"Uh, and you sirs are from this place or how?" Diddy asked, still doubtful.

"Of course," one of the apes replied, smiling at them. "We manage this shelter."

"And by the way... what is the name of this island?" asked Dixie curiously.

"Oh, this is *Hurricane Island*," replied another of the apes. "Well, and what are you waiting for? Come this way," he added, again beckoning them.

Diddy and Dixie had never heard about that island in their lives, so it was clear that they were too far from DK Island. Not even Dixie, who had been to several islands, had heard of it.

The two little kongs joined the rest of the animals at the table where they had been invited. Apparently, it was lunchtime. The animals of the circus and zoo seemed to enjoy their lunch quite as if it were a banquet; now they were seen tasting a meal well. Along with them, there was the group of big gorillas who, apparently as they were mentioned, were the owners of that shelter. Diddy and Dixie, from their respective seats, were still observing the environment where they were now; after all, nothing out of the ordinary looked in that area.

"And where do you say you live, little monkeys?" asked the group of apes before standing on the sides at the table.

"On DK Island," replied Diddy. "Do you know it by chance?"

"DK Island... DK Island," said one of the apes pensively. "Hmm... No, I don't think it rings a bell. Is there anyone famous who lives on your island?"

"Donkey Kong."

The group of apes looked at each other in case anyone knew the aforementioned Donkey Kong... But seconds later, everyone seemed to have no affirmative answer.

"Well, no. We don't know any Donkey Kong. I suppose that the DK Island you mention must be very far from here."

"What!?" exclaimed Diddy in confusion. "But... *is Donkey Kong*, is the future ruler of DK Island and its greatest hero. In fact, he's my uncle. Do you really not know him?"

"That name doesn't really ring a bell," replied one of the apes.

Diddy and Dixie made a gesture of concern. Generally, Donkey was very recognized by many, but if they were in a place where nobody claimed to know anything about him, it was something that made them think that they were very far from home... and that began to worry them much more.

"So... you don't know either," Dixie said, looking worried.

"Hey, but don't worry, little monkeys," one of the apes said kindly. "You can stay here too until you manage to find your island again."

"We really appreciate it. But we must return as soon as possible," Dixie replied with concern. "There on our island we have family and friends, and they must be worried about us. We've been away from there for almost a week."

"By the way, doesn't anyone remember the way to the city?" Diddy asked all the animals. "Maybe we can go back there and get back on the way home."

"Oh, no, no! It's not a good time now to sail across the sea," replied one of the apes from the shelter, somewhat concerned. "Well, now it's *hurricane* season and *whirlpools* in that area, it's *very dangerous*. Perhaps the storm that swept you away was part of that."

"In fact, we are a group of apes that offers refuge and assistance of various kinds to shipwrecked animals, and in these seasons is where we receive them the most. Almost everyone who arrives here, it's because the wind of this season brings them to this island, in fact... because of that it's called *Hurricane Island*."

"Or rather, *most* of the things that go through the hurricane are washed up on this island."

"These new animals were also brought here by the wind. Although... this time they tell me that they are runaway animals from a zoo that you released, right?"

"That's right," replied Diddy. "But we still have to go home... And when are those hurricanes you mention over?"

"Well, they just started recently," the apes replied with a shrug. "They should be finished in about three months, which is how long they usually last. So, for now you can't sail."

"*Three months?!*" exclaimed Diddy and Dixie in unison, shocked and as if they had been given some news they didn't want to hear. "It's... a long time."

"But as I told you, you can stay here. We have enough food and sleeping spaces; you'll be safe here."

Diddy and Dixie were very disappointed; in addition to having landed on an unknown island, they would now also have to wait almost an entire season to be able to consider returning home. Both of them just wished to close their eyes and wake up on DK Island, or even go back a week so they hadn't done things wrong. Even so, they were grateful that those apes left them a space to stay and, of course, something that reassured them even a little, was that they came across several known animals.

"If you want you can go explore the island; there are many interesting places," one of the apes suggested. "Only don't go far so you don't get lost; this island also has unknown areas."

"And... how long can one stay here in case we have nowhere else to go?" asked Dixie.

"Don't worry about that either," replied another of the apes, smiling at them. "You can stay as long as you want if you say you have an island to reach. Even if you need help with something, don't hesitate to ask us. Make yourself at home."

Diddy and Dixie looked at each other and shrugged; at least they didn't see anything to worry about in that place or on that island, so they just thanked the ape group for their invitations.

Both little kongs, upon finishing eating, didn't hesitate to start exploring the island... or rather, try to keep searching for DK Island. Neither of them wanted to give up, much less wait an entire season to be able to return.

"Well, thank you for the food," Diddy said to the apes, smiling at them along with Dixie. "Now we'll go... to explore around here."

"And thank you for letting us stay here," Dixie added before going with Diddy.

"It's nothing, little ones," replied one of the apes, smiling at them too. "Be careful outside, and don't forget, we're here to serve you."

Diddy and Dixie said goodbye to all the known animals and, after that, left the shelter. Now, with daylight, they would have a better chance of finding any traces of DK Island.

"Wow, I never thought we'd meet them again," Diddy said as they walked out of the shelter.

"I think the same," Dixie replied, pausing to look around and toward the shelter. "But at least it seems that this island is safe... Although I don't want to stay here either," she added, whispering insecurely.

"Neither do I," Diddy replied in kind, as he looked everywhere. "And now what do we do?"

"We have to take advantage now to find the island. We cannot let too much time pass."

"But where do we start?"

Looking better everywhere, they realized that, especially for Dixie, it was the same as having arrived in the city: everything was very extensive and they didn't know where to start looking for DK Island, and this time there were no buildings as references; only trees, ground and a few small birds in sight.

"Uhh... Let's go for... over there," Dixie pointed in a random direction.

Both began to move along random paths, as long as, trying not to lose sight of the shelter of animals in case some problems were presented. They searched all over the beach they could walk, over the tallest trees they could find and through several areas overlooking the sea... But even so, they didn't find anything similar to DK Island. Indeed, it seemed to be true that DK Island would be too far away.

They stopped for a while to rest in frustration, while observing the horizon of the sea. In the distance it could clearly see a cloudy environment with no sunlight, confirming that in short, the weather was not good as the apes mentioned in the shelter.

"Oh, no! We'll never find the island," Diddy complained as he looked toward the horizons in detail. "It doesn't even look good with that haze in the distance."

"I don't want to stay here for three long months," Dixie added in the same way, crossing her arms. "We'll miss the vacation!"

"Or I got an idea!" Diddy exclaimed, getting up. "What if we build another boat or something to search by the sea?"

"But... what if another giant wave appears again because of the hurricanes and whirlpools that we were told about?"

"But we have no choice; we must return to DK Island soon. Remember that those four fools from school are armed again as you told me; who knows what they are planning now. Even worse if you say that Jemky is probably... you know. Those other three fools can take revenge and not in a good way."

"I know, it's true. But where will we go to search in the middle of the sea?"

"We just go and search; we won't find anything if we stay here... We may even have to escape from that shelter."

"Agreed," Dixie replied with no choice. "So... let's go now?"

Diddy and Dixie headed back towards the beach. Either way, they had to find a way back to DK Island. They were grateful that the other animals had offered them shelter, but even so, they couldn't stay another day like that: away from their home and their families and friends on DK Island... and with problems to solve.

When they arrived at the beach where they had arrived at the beginning, they began to look for materials to be able to assemble a raft or a boat that could take them. They went to an area of fallen trees, where there were trunks and large pieces of wood, and began to collect them.

"Wow, there's too much wood around here," Dixie said as she picked up and examined some loose pieces of wood. "It's like it's a dumping ground here."

"Hey, this one even..." Diddy added, examining a much larger piece, "it's like it was shaped like a boat or something."

For some reason, those pieces of wood that were in the area, seemed to have very particular shapes... They were as if they had already had use and showed that they had been parts of old and broken boats. Some fragments even showed themselves to be shaped like large boats that seemed to have had a terrible end.

"Wow, this is very strange," Dixie said, looking at one of those large fragments.

Both rummaged another while until they realized that, in short, those pieces of wood did seem to be remains of boats, which made them think about several scenarios about how they could have gotten there, considering the climatic phenomena they had been told in the shelter. Even so, there was no time to continue drawing conclusions, so they returned to their main matter.

"We must build a boat that is sturdy enough to sail in that wild sea," Diddy said as he rummaged for more pieces of wood.

"What if we ask the other animals for help?" Dixie suggested as she carried more pieces of wood.

"I'd like to, but surely they're not going to let us go because of the whirlpools and hurricanes."

"The truth is that I don't believe so much that DK Island is as far away as they say; maybe they just don't know it and that's it."

Both continued to search for branches, trunks and pieces of wood so they could assemble a small boat. They were piling up all the pieces in one place.

"Hey, Dixie," Diddy said after a while as they were still in the matter.

"Yeah?"

"By the way, no one on DK Island wanted to come with you to find me?"

"Yes, almost everyone wanted to come, but I told them that I would go alone. I didn't want to expose them to danger."

"Really? And how did you convince them?" Diddy asked with a look of astonishment.

"Well, I told them to investigate Jemky's case, and to let me go alone if I told them that those four..."
"Dixie stopped in her tracks when she realized she was saying something she shouldn't.

"What?" Diddy asked with a look of surprise and leaving the pieces of wood on the ground. "Wait... Haven't you told them that those four fools had guns and the whole story about them?"

Dixie fell silent when she realized that she couldn't tell Diddy that she had already told the other kongs about the bullying they received from that quartet of bullies. It was a secret that, even if it was bad keeping it, she had promised Diddy long ago that she wouldn't tell anyone.

"Oh, no, Dixie, tell me no..." Diddy said, noticing Dixie's paralyzed expression.

"Diddy..." Dixie replied slowly. "Sorry, but..."

"No, no, no, Dixie, tell me you didn't tell anyone!" Diddy interrupted desperately.

"Ugh, sorry, Diddy!" Dixie replied, sighing before telling the truth. "I had no choice; your disappearance was an emergency, and all I thought was that those stupid kids would have done something bad to you. So... I had to tell Donkey and the others that."

Diddy froze for a few seconds before reacting again in alarm.

"Oh, no, Dixie! What did you do?! Tell me it's not true!" Diddy exclaimed, more desperate. "You didn't have to tell anyone, you promised me!"

"I know, but I couldn't hide it at the time, Diddy," Dixie replied. "Anyways, Donkey and the others did suspect something. In fact, almost everyone suspected that *those four* had to do with your disappearance."

"But you could have told them something else!" replied Diddy, beginning to look disgusted. "Even when we were at the circus, you told me you hadn't told anyone!"

"Diddy, it was a serious situation, I couldn't lie to them at the time!" Dixie replied.

"Ugh, I won't tell you anything again!" Diddy exclaimed, now annoyed.

"*Hey!* I told you that it was a *serious situation!*" replied Dixie, raising her voice as well.

"But it was a secret, Dixie! I thought I could entrust them to you!"

"I always keep your secrets, but with that one I couldn't do it in the middle of that situation!" replied Dixie before pausing and looking seriously at Diddy. "And sorry to tell you this, Diddy, but it really wasn't good for you to keep hiding that. It was a bad secret, I mean... it was a threat! Such secrets should *not* be hidden."

"Yeah, you said it: a *threat*. Those four said that if I accused them, they would hurt them all. And surely Donkey and the others are already looking for them to give them face."

"Oh, Diddy! Those kinds of bullies threaten you like that just to scare you, not that they're really going to do it. You'd have told Donkey or Wrinkly a long time ago!"

"You say they only threaten like this to scare me?! Well, so excuse me for what I'll tell you, but how did you feel when those fools threatened you to steal my pyramid and not tell anyone because otherwise, they would finish me, the teacher and the whole class?"

"Well..." Dixie said quietly, not knowing how to respond defensively. "Oh, anyways, maybe if you had reported them on time, that wouldn't have happened either, did you know?! And sorry to tell you something else, Diddy, but none of this would be happening if you had reported them on time!"

"Oh, wow," Diddy said with his arms crossed, before raising his voice again. "Well, just look at that, that's how it feels not to be able to do it! Even you said it yourself when we were in the circus!"

"Ugh, okay, it's enough, Diddy! Let's argue no more and keep making that boat," Dixie replied defensively. "What's more, I always tried to understand that you didn't want to tell that secret, when I shouldn't *have hidden it* either!"

"And I should never have told you!" exclaimed Diddy, all annoyed. "I'll never tell you anything again, Dixie! I thought I could trust you!"

Dixie showed a shocked face at Diddy's last words, which made her much angrier.

"*Urgh!* You know what, Diddy?! I'd better build my *own* boat and *you'll* think on your own how you get back to DK Island!"

"Ah, yeah? Well, I won't have any problem! I can make my own boat too! And you know what?! It's going to look *better than* yours!"

"Well, we'll see! And in the meantime, don't *even think about talking to me, Diddy!* You can go to the tide of the sea *and be stirred by the waves!*"

"*Oh, right!* As you wish, Dixie Kong!" replied Diddy in the same tone. "You'll see that I'll finish my boat first than you *and it'll be much better!*"

All that said, they both turned around and each went their own way... Not without first, turning again and looking at each other in the distance with a bad face, then each one made a mockery, and then returned to what they were going.

Diddy felt very angry with Dixie, as she was the only one to whom he had confided the secret about his classmates, and that she had reported it to the entire Kong family was something that annoyed and disappointed him too much. He was always afraid that would happen, as he didn't want conflicts to be created between the bully quartet and Donkey or Wrinkly and it would all end very badly.

Dixie, on the other hand, felt bad for having revealed that secret of Diddy, although to tell the truth, she always knew that it was not good for them to hide that. In turn, she was also angry with Diddy because of how he had taken it.

Diddy and Dixie had distanced themselves with the recent argument, so each settled in different places on the beach, and now each began to build their own boat.

"Bah! I don't care, I don't need her, I can with my own boat," Diddy said to himself firmly.

Diddy returned to look for wood to start building his boat. It took him several minutes to gather quite a few logs and sheets of wood, but he figured it wouldn't be that difficult to make a boat himself. The first thing he did was to select the pieces of wood that could serve him. He began to remember how they had built the boats that the animals made after having escaped from the circus, as well as, he remembered how Funky made his inventions. But then... he realized that the boats that the animals had built were too simple to withstand storms, while for Funky's he needed complex tools that were not available at the time.

Anyway, Diddy made a plan to build the boat. He spent a couple of hours putting the pieces and trying to fit them together, from time to time, he hurt his limbs either from some sharp piece or because some heavy piece fell on him.

A while later, Diddy had finished building his boat. It was satisfying for him to have been able to build one on his own, and he could now resume the search for DK Island. But a few minutes later, a piece of the boat came loose, so Diddy tried to put it back in. But in his attempt to fix it... the whole boat fell apart. He was frustrated to see that his effort was not worth it.

But Diddy wasn't going to give up, so he tried again to build a new boat. He did the same procedure until he got it. After a few moments, he already had a finished boat for the second time and hoped that this time it would work for him... But as soon as he got on it, it crumbled again. Diddy tried for the third time to put together a boat... Then a fourth time... Later, a fifth... And a sixth.

For the umpteenth time, there was Diddy with a frustrated face when he saw that no attempt to build a sturdy boat turned out well. He decided better to sit down to rest and relax for a while so as not to get upset. Minutes later, he began to hear some noises that had been resonating in the area for a long time; they were continuous and constant as if someone was hitting something. Diddy, with enormous curiosity, got up to follow those noises to see where they came from.

When the sound was heard more closely, Diddy peeked through some bushes. He put on a face of astonishment at what he saw: a boat placed on a very firm support and, although it wasn't yet finished, it looked quite well built. And the noises came from none other than Dixie, who was with a sharp stone in hand making small holes in the corners of the boat. On the other hand, she had a campfire lit under a roof of leaves built; above this, there was another support on which she had a sheet of wood heating up. A moment later, Dixie took that sheet and folded it slightly and then placed it on one of the sides of the boat, then continued to make holes in the corners where small vines passed to hold the pieces.

Diddy gawked at Dixie's maneuver; he had to admit that she was doing well. At one point, Dixie looked in any random direction and, by chance for her, reached to catch Diddy watching her. Diddy looked away and instantly hid upon being found out by Dixie. But she just ignored him indifferently while rolling her eyes.

Minutes later, Dixie decided to rest for a while. But then, she was also curious and decided to go to where Diddy was to spy on how he was doing with his boat. She tried to follow any noise she heard and crept stealthily through some bushes when she found Diddy. He still struggled to manage building a boat, he even began to apply the same methods of Dixie: with some rocks he tried to make holes in the corners of his boat; at first, he didn't do it with enough force, so each time he was

making stronger blows that ended up breaking the whole piece. Seconds later, his new boat attempt collapsed again. Diddy went into despair, threw his cap to the ground, and stomped on it several times. Dixie, while watching the scene, only laughed quietly, but pride also dominated her, so she rolled her eyes again and then left to continue with her own boat.

An hour later, and with the umpteenth boat attempt, Diddy went out to look for vines to be able to tie the pieces. He climbed up leafy trees that contained large quantities of tangled vines, as he needed ones that were thin and strong at the same time to hold pieces of wood.

Diddy, walking on a branch of the trees, noticed some vines that looked perfect for use in the boat. Between times, he could hear certain footsteps on the nearby branches, but he didn't take it seriously. The vines he wanted to reach were a little high, so he had to walk to the end of the branch and stretch his arm as far as he could to reach them. When he arrived, the branch where he was, began to emit a breaking sound and, when he pulled those vines, everything around him began to move until, another branch that was higher, caused a large number of leaves, branches and vines to fall towards the ground and, therefore, Diddy also fell along with all that.

When Diddy got up, he was tangled and covered with leaves and vines, and it took him a couple of minutes to untie himself. Suddenly, he heard something moving among the pile of leaves that had formed, so he walked around the pile to find out what it was. He was shocked when he discovered that it was nothing more than Dixie, who in turn, also showed a gesture of astonishment when she met him head-on. They both looked at each other not knowing what to say or what face to make. Dixie just turned around, making a gesture of indifference to him, and hurriedly picked up a few vines that she was also looking for. But she didn't notice that a vine was getting entangled in her foot and, after a few seconds, she tripped and rolled to the ground, but she immediately got up and continued on her way. Diddy turned around and laughed disguised at her stumble, but was interrupted when, by accident, he stepped on a sharp branch and gave a little squeal, to which Dixie also laughed at the low... Both deep down wanted to talk to each other, but pride still dominated them, so they returned to where they were assembling their respective boats.

In the evening hours, each kong on its side, sat down to take a break. After all, it wasn't so easy to build a sturdy boat on own, especially for Diddy, who only took a break from frustration at not being able to build his boat, as all his attempts had failed. Unlike Dixie, who seemed to have her boat ready, but still wasn't sure if it would work perfectly.

Night had fallen, so it was too late to go out and find DK Island by sea, so both Diddy and Dixie were considering staying until the next day. Neither of them spoke to each other throughout the afternoon, although between times, they spied on each other to see what they were doing and how they were doing with the building of their respective boats.

Diddy was sitting on the sand, resting after he had given up assembling the boat. He didn't have anything else to do about it, he was just sitting without knowing what to do on a distant island, more and more regretting having gone out that night for a ride by the sea; he just wanted to close his eyes and upon open them, appear on DK Island, at his house with Donkey. He wanted to turn back time, maybe so he wouldn't have gone out that night... maybe to have confessed his feelings to Dixie when he had the chance, or even... *to have reported the quartet of bullies* to Wrinkly and Donkey, even if he was afraid that those four kids would harm them in revenge. Even so... he was beginning to think that Dixie might be right: everything would be better if he had reported the four of them from the beginning.

"Oh, Dixie..." he said to himself in his mind and with a low look.

"Diddy! Here you are. I was looking for you" one of the gorillas from the circus suddenly appeared, interrupting Diddy's thoughts.

"Uh, hi," Diddy greeted, turning to look at him. "What's up?"

"Well, the apes have prepared a dinner at the shelter and they want to invite you."

"Oh, great," Diddy replied, smiling. "Right now?"

"That's right. And your friend Dixie? Isn't she with you?"

"Oh, yeah, she is..." Diddy paused as he thought about what to answer, before pointing in the direction of where Dixie would be. "Well, she's over there."

"Well, call her and tell her she's also invited."

"No, no. I mean, don't they need me to help them with something for dinner?" Diddy replied with a forced smile. "Well, it's that... Dixie is over there, and... crabs! Yes, she is looking at crabs, she likes them very much and... she doesn't want to be interrupted now."

"Oh, okay... But what do you plan to do at dinner?" asked the gorilla looking at him strangely.

"Well, I could help you with some dishes while you can go call Dixie, what do you think?"

"Well, okay... I think we would need your help to serve the dishes anyways," said the gorilla, still looking at him strangely. "And where is Dixie by the way?"

"I think she's over there, after those rocks and that tree," Diddy pointed in one direction.

Diddy didn't feel ready to talk to Dixie again, not after the argument they had that afternoon, so he just told that gorilla to call her, and headed towards the shelter soon after, at least to clear his mind...

Chapter 30: Clarifications

In the shelter of the animals, the group of gorillas that were the owners there, were preparing a dinner for all those present; it seemed to be their custom to offer a quality dinner to the newcomers. Likewise, the animals that were from the circus and the zoo also helped and, among them, Diddy had sneaked in; he didn't really have much to do, as there were many animals volunteering.

Diddy was bringing a few dishes to the table, when suddenly, he realized at a distance that Dixie had come. He had to avoid making eye contact with her and, if possible, pretend he hadn't seen her. When Diddy finished doing everything, he went to sit down together with all the animals, and of course, Dixie had to sit next to him. In the same way, she didn't want to look at him when she arrived.

The other animals talked normally as they began to eat. The table was very extensive and had a lot of food on top, mostly fruits. The animals that were from the circus had several patches on their wounds to heal, while they were having another countenance thanks to the help they would receive in that shelter.

For their part, Diddy and Dixie were silent, just eating without uttering a word. Between times, they looked sideways at each other, but then immediately looked away again.

"Hey, why are you two so quiet?" one of the animals asked them both. "Did you go this afternoon to explore this island?"

"Uhh... Yeah... *Of course* we went," Diddy replied, lying to them with a forced smile.

"That's good, and where have you been? Have you seen the lake cliff changing color?"

"Well... Oh, yes," Dixie added, going with the flow. "Yeah, we went to that colorful lake, we even swam there."

"Swimming?! But if you can't swim in that lake; there are toxic substances inside."

"No, but it wasn't at the lake, it was at the beach," Diddy continued, arranging the excuse.

"That's good, little monkeys... And what else do you tell us about you? What is your Island DK like?"

Diddy and Dixie continued to talk to the animals, although they rarely spoke to each other; it was a pleasant moment and at the same time somewhat tense. They didn't tell them that they actually spent the afternoon building boats because they knew that all would contradict them with the idea that the sea was dangerous at that time. They also didn't say they had argued, so all the time they pretended to get along normally.

"Dessert time!" exclaimed one of the apes of the refuge while bringing several plates with fruit cakes, creating excitement in those ones present.

"Oh, and for you, little monkeys: banana cake special just for you," said another ape, handing a plate of slices of banana cake to Diddy and Dixie.

The pieces of cake looked so delicious that it made both kongs' eyes shine, and they didn't hesitate for a second to eat them. They ate the whole dessert until they left only one slice on the plate; Dixie was going to eat her right away, but Diddy went ahead first... although before doing so, he stopped and decided to leave it for Dixie; she hesitated to take the last piece, but Diddy smiled at her somewhat shyly as a sign that she could keep it for herself... Dixie gave him a look of strangeness at the gesture, but then agreed anyway.

The night continued, and all the animals continued to talk until later. After all, it hadn't been a bad place for Diddy and Dixie either; at least there were many animals already known before and they had safe refuge to stay.

It was already going to be bedtime, so each of the animals had planned their space to rest. Some preferred to sleep on the ground, others on rocks, others in lagoons, while others in trees.

"Will we sleep here?" Diddy asked, pointing to some branches.

"Yes, there is enough space for both," replied the apes in the shelter. "Just get comfortable and sleep peacefully."

Diddy and Dixie climbed some tree branches not so far to the ground. Each had a nest made of leaves and branches, and each settled in place to sleep.

"Now we let you rest, little monkeys. Good night," the apes told them.

"Good night," they both replied at the same time, as the rest of the animals.

The apes left and let all the animals to rest. Diddy and Dixie looked at each other sideways from their positions, but still didn't say a word to each other; they just turned over and lay down to sleep. Around their nests, there were all the other animals resting each in various corners. The atmosphere was cozy and very comfortable... Until some of the animals began to emit loud snoring.

Maybe half an hour passed. Everyone was well asleep, except for Diddy and Dixie, who couldn't fall asleep, and just tossed and turned trying to sleep. The snoring of others, especially those from big animals, was becoming louder and more repetitive. Not even in the circus did they make so much noise, because having more animals sleeping in the same area, the environment was no longer as suitable to sleep as thought.

Between times, Dixie threw light branches at the animals to make them shut up, but the effect only lasted a few seconds and then the loud snoring invaded the environment again. She couldn't take it anymore and decided to get down from the tree, then she left the shelter and went for a walk outside.

Soon, Diddy noticed that Dixie had gone out and he watched her until the end, then settled back into his position to sleep... But suddenly, he remembered on the terms that he was with her again... After thinking it over, he was very regretful for arguing with Dixie; while it was true that she didn't keep his secret... he thought she might be right; maybe it wasn't good to keep hiding that about his bad classmates. He also thought that if he had reported them from the beginning, Wrinkly would have taken preventive measures and stopped them or even expelled them from Kong Kollege... But everything had already passed and the story couldn't be changed anymore. Now, Diddy only had to

fix things with Dixie first, and then resume the search for DK Island. He didn't want to be on bad terms with her again; it wouldn't be worth it... He even remembered Donkey, because in the same way he had several arguments with him when it came to the quartet of his bad classmates; he didn't want to have a problem like that with Dixie because of it.

After thinking about it, Diddy also got up to leave the shelter, and decided to follow Dixie. He tried not to make so much noise so as not to wake anyone up, and went outside. He walked for a while until he managed to locate Dixie in the distance and went in her direction, making sure she still didn't notice his presence. He walked a few meters up some hills, not so far from the shelter, until later, he watched Dixie stop.

Dixie had gone to sit under a willow tree on the banks of a cliff overlooking the sea, just to watch out of nowhere. Diddy walked to the willow tree where she was and stopped to think about how he would talk to her normally again and, of course, how to apologize to her. He took a few stealthy steps until he got a little closer to where she was, and peeked out of one side of the tree. Dixie felt his presence and turned to look at him, so Diddy immediately hid again. Even so, Dixie had already figured him out, so he came out anyway, but she just ignored him and even turned her head so as not to see him.

"Uhh... Hi!" said Diddy, trying to get the words out and speaking with a forced smile. "Uh... I... I'm Diddy and... I was coming looking for... Dixie! Well... she's... my *best friend* and... we have to... return to DK Island, or else, we'll stay here on this unknown island... forever!"

Diddy didn't even know what he was saying, while Dixie still continued to stay serious and didn't want to answer him, she didn't even turn to look at him; she completely ignored him as if he wasn't there and as if she hadn't seen him coming.

"Oh, okay, Dixie. I... I'm sorry," he said before sighing and speaking normally this time. "Forgive me, I don't want to continue fighting with you, we already had done it before we left DK Island; I wouldn't want it to be repeated."

Dixie still kept ignoring him, not looking at him and not talking to him at all. Diddy was silent for a few seconds and then, quite unsurely, sat next to her.

"If you want to, don't look at me, but just listen to me," Diddy said somewhat shyly and hoping Dixie wouldn't ignore him. "Well... I know you told Donkey and the others about those fools, and you know I didn't want anyone to know so as not to cause conflict between them... Yes, that annoyed me a lot, but... maybe you're right: if I had reported them a long time ago, we wouldn't even be here... Wrinkly would have done something about it. But all I did was keep it to myself... And now, I understood that those secrets shouldn't be kept. And forgive me, I don't want to be on bad terms with you again, Dixie. I can't get mad at you when... you have done much for me... You went for me to that zoo, you stayed the whole time I was locked up there, and we released everyone else. We ended up here on this island, we don't know where DK Island is, but... we can still keep looking for it. I don't want us to be like this, much less in this situation. We'll continue to build the boat... If you want, we could use yours; that one was better than mine, and... What are you laughing at? Hey! You're laughing!"

Suddenly, Dixie was starting to snicker and then burst out laughing.

"It's that... I remembered w-when..." Dixie said, trying to hold back her laughter and finally turning to look at him, "when you were also trying to make holes in the boat and everything was damaged! And then you started stomping your cap on the ground!"

"Hey, it's not funny!" Diddy replied, placing his hands at his sides. "Well, I laughed when you tripped over the vines!"

"Ah, yeah? Well, who was it that made all that pile of branches and vines fall to the ground?" Dixie added, challenging him.

"It was an accident," Diddy replied before returning to normal talk. "And by the way... where did you learn to build boats?"

"Remember that with Tiny, Kiddy and Chunky we learned some things about survival when we moved from islands."

Diddy and Dixie, leaving the topic aside for a while, continued to laugh a little as they recalled the anecdotes of that same afternoon when they built their respective boats. But after a moment, Dixie became serious again.

"Uhh... Diddy, I..." she said in a calmer tone and stopped the laughter completely. "Okay, I can forgive you, we shouldn't be like this," she added before speaking to him quite seriously. "But... the truth is that it did annoy me that you took it that way. All this time I even just tried to understand you, to put myself in your place, and I also kept that secret when we shouldn't have done," Dixie sighed before continuing. "Anyway... also excuse me, Diddy, for revealing that when I promised you not to do it."

"Oh, no, no, don't apologize for that, Dixie... You just did what I should have done a long time ago," Diddy said, placing a hand on her shoulder. "And don't worry, maybe those four fools aren't even on DK Island; we just have to be careful not to run into them when we return... And it's not true what I told you about not trusting you anymore or returning in my own boat to DK Island, of course I wouldn't leave here without you, Dixie."

Dixie continued to be serious for a few seconds, although it seemed to have made her feel a little better that Diddy had begun to recognize the situation as it was.

"Okay, Diddy," Dixie replied, putting a hand on his shoulder and smiling a little again. "So, I think... it's all clear, and the important thing now is that we continue to stay together on returning to DK Island. And I know, I... I wasn't really going to leave without you either; Obviously we must return together."

Diddy smiled back, this time feeling better too, having managed to talk about it with Dixie.

"Well..." Dixie added later. "Do we go back there to the shelter or do we stay?"

"I don't think I want to sleep there; everyone snores like thunder."

"You're right, I couldn't stand them anymore, that's why I got out of there," Dixie said with a slight laugh. "The place is nice, but not to sleep."

"It's true, I think I would prefer a house to sleep in."

Then, they both fell silent and sat looking up at the horizon in sight. At last, the two seemed to have truly reconciled; they just hoped not to have fights again for small causes, much less Diddy, since he no longer wanted to have an argument because of that topic with someone important to him... He even remembered Donkey and the times the same thing had happened with him.

As they looked at the horizon from where they were, they only saw the sea being covered by a thick fog, which began to generate uncertainty, especially for Dixie.

"Diddy... do you think we'll be able to get home?" Dixie asked in a low tone.

"Of course... I hope so," Diddy replied even though he also had that uncertainty. "Well, I'm pretty sure it does. We just have to finish the boat, carry enough food and water, and watch out for storms. Who knows, and in the end DK Island is not so far away."

Dixie didn't answer, just looked down, wondering if they could really return from an island they hadn't even known. Diddy just turned to look at her again; he also felt the same way and didn't really have high expectations that they could achieve it, but he needed to stay calm and wanted to cheer Dixie up to stay that way too.

"Don't worry, Dix. We'll get out of this, you'll see," he said, placing a hand on her shoulder. "If we manage to get out of that zoo, we might as well get out of here and everything will be fine again."

Dixie smiled a little, and then continued quietly looking at the panorama in front of them. It was too late to stay awake, but they also didn't want to return to the shelter for the time being, because of the noisy environment there.

"Hey, Diddy," Dixie said after a while, as they looked at the horizon.

"Yeah?"

"When we were still on DK Island... what did you want to tell me so much?"

"What are you talking about?"

"When you told me you liked my pyramid, what else were you going to tell me at the last moment?"

Diddy felt a slight acceleration in his heartbeat upon hearing that. He remembered that he had to confess something very important to Dixie, that he struggled too much to say it and didn't manage it, and that with Jemky's matter the encouragement to do it had disappeared, but... Jemky's was fake, so... he could still do it, but he would have to take courage again. Also, he didn't know if in a situation like that it would be a good time to say it.

"Well... Oh, yes," he replied with a forced smile. "It was just that: that I liked your pyramid, you made it great and-"

"Diddy, I do know," Dixie interrupted with a little laugh. "Really... weren't you going to tell me *anything else*?"

Diddy remained silent, he realized that maybe it was a good time to tell her: both were alone, with no one or anything to interrupt them, with nothing else to do for the moment. But even so, nerves began to invade him and he was still afraid of how Dixie would react. It had been a week since he felt that way again.

"Well... In fact... there was something else I was going to tell you," Diddy replied, trying to swallow his nerves after saying that.

"And... was something important?" Dixie asked, still with a few little laughs.

"Well... okay. I-I'll tell you," Diddy said, controlling his nerves and looking into her eyes between moments as he settled down to be in front of her. "Well, Dix, is that... you're my friend and... well, I consider them all very good friends like Donkey or Funky. And... I consider Chunky, Kiddy and Tiny very much... But you... You are *something special* and... you really are very important to me, Dix. With you I feel great, I like to spend time with you... Oh, I don't know how to explain it to you-"

"Okay, Diddy," Dixie interrupted, smiling with a few slight blushes and placing her hand on his unexpectedly, which made Diddy's heartbeat faster. "You... You are also very important to me... I love you very much, seriously."

Both of them continued in silence, not knowing what else to say. Diddy tried to tell her in a subtle way, since he didn't yet have the courage to say it well. Dixie, on the other hand, looked him straight in the eye, to which Diddy also looked at her and smiled at her, while his heartbeat was racing after that response from her.

Suddenly, Dixie came a little closer. Diddy was confused about it, but then he began to wonder what could happen... Maybe *something* that also happened before the storm swept them away and that, although in the afternoon they were on bad terms, was the thought that most resonated in the minds of the two. Diddy also moved a little closer to her, while Dixie felt all her nerves inside her just like Diddy, who felt her heart beating faster and faster. Seconds later, Dixie took Diddy's face, and then both of them were getting closer and closing their eyes. A couple of seconds later... their lips had come together with each other. Dixie separated almost instantly and looked into Diddy's eyes again, wondering if what was happening between the two was real, while he was paralyzed by what had just happened... But then, although with all nerves, he also took Dixie's face and led it to his... until they put their lips together again. During the moment they kept their lips in contact, they felt their hearts beat too intensely as if they were going to come out, in addition to feeling continuous fluttering in the stomach, but at the same time, they enjoyed it... forgetting for a while that they were on a distant island.

They parted later, opening their eyes as Diddy stroked Dixie's hair tenderly, and she held his face. They looked into each other's eyes for another while, watching every detail of them, still with their hearts beating with intensity. Then, they both sat up sideways and looked away. Neither of them wanted to say another word; they just wondered if they were dreaming or if it had been real.

A moment later, Diddy turned to look at Dixie, and she did the same. They smiled shyly and, although with all the nerves alive, they were settling down to be next to each other. Diddy hugged Dixie sideways, while she wrapped her hair around him and then reciprocated the hug. Diddy would make internal jumps of excitement, and Dixie would smile as much as she could as they stayed that way. Both enjoyed each other's company; it was an emotion they didn't know how to describe at that moment.

Chapter 31: Confessions

The next day had arrived. Diddy was sleeping under the willow, of course, with a smile that for the moment nothing could take away. Then, he began to open his eyes and get up. He had fallen asleep under that tree just like Dixie since the night before, although to his surprise, she was not there, since apparently, she had woken up earlier than him. Even so, Diddy kept remembering that last moment shared with Dixie; it was the first thing he thought of when he woke up, and he had never felt that emotion he had back then. But at the same time, he also wondered if Dixie was thinking the same thing, if it had meant the same thing to her as it did to him.

"Diddy," Dixie called to him, appearing after him, and Diddy turned to look at her. "Uhh... The shelter apes called us to eat, will you come?"

"Ah, yeah, I will."

Diddy got up and headed along with Dixie back to the shelter. Both of them didn't want to say a word along the way. Diddy, despite being excited, also felt very nervous about being around Dixie again. For her part, she also felt the same way. Even so, Dixie also couldn't help but smile as she remembered that moment with Diddy, in fact, she didn't know why, but it had even lifted her spirits in the middle of the whole situation.

"Uhh... Did you sleep well, Dix?" Diddy asked her on the way later, trying to break the silence.

"Yes... Sure," she replied, still somewhat shyly. "At least here it was quieter without snoring," she added, laughing a little.

The two just looked at each other with some shyness and couldn't help but smile, although they didn't talk much.

Minutes later, they arrived at the animal shelter. Everyone was gathered back at the table, to which Diddy and Dixie also met with them to have their respective breakfasts, which consisted of fruits.

"Hey, little monkeys," said one of the apes, who owned the shelter, to Diddy and Dixie. "Today we'll go with everyone here to collect fruits for meals, and we need your help too, do you want to come?"

"Okay," Diddy replied as he ate.

"Of course," Dixie added in kind.

"Well, we'll split into groups later," said the apes. "There are many animals, so it won't be a complicated task."

After the meal, all the animals were organized for collection, and divided into several groups. This time, Diddy and Dixie were in different groups, as they both felt somewhat shy about seeing each other again after what had happened the night before. Among the groups, there were both the animals that were from the circus and the zoo, as well as those who were already in that shelter before.

Each group went to some area where there were hundreds of fruit trees, ready for harvest. It seemed to be an activity that they used to do in the shelter so that they could all stock up.

On the one hand, Diddy was gathered with a small group of animals that were from the circus. He had decided to hang out with them, as they were the ones he felt most confident talking to and hanging around with.

"Hey, Diddy," said one of the tigers who were from the circus.

"Yeah?" Diddy replied as he climbed a tree to pick some fruit.

"Where did you go with Dixie last night? We didn't see you two at the shelter in the early morning."

"Well... Over there," he replied as he picked the fruits. "We only went for a walk for a while."

"Are you and her a couple?" one of the circus elephants asked him with a look of curiosity.

"What?!" Diddy exclaimed, feeling a small quickening in his heartbeat as he heard that unsuspecting question. "No, nothing to do with. We're just friends," he added with some nerves and trying not to show blushing.

"Oh, but do *you like her*?" asked one of the circus gorillas.

Diddy opened his eyes to the fullest, was quiet, and barely smiled inevitably at the question.

"N-no, of course not," Diddy replied with a smile and turned back to the tree to pick more fruit.

"Oh, come on, little monkey! Don't lie," the elephant told him with a playful look. "It shows very clearly. I have seen how you stare at her and how you talk to her. We've noticed it since we were in the circus."

"Are you sure there's nothing you feel for her more than a friendship?" the tiger asked, looking at him with suspicions and giving him little pushes. "Come on, just see how you are smiling."

"Oh, well..." Diddy said after coming down from the tree, trying not to laugh at the nerves. "The truth... Can I say that... *I do*?"

"We knew it!" exclaimed the animals of the circus with emotion. "And have you already told her you like her?"

"No, not yet."

"And what are you waiting for?" the tiger exclaimed.

"Bah! It wouldn't be necessary," said a random animal from that island, wading into the conversation along with two other animals. "Don't waste your time, monkey. Girls just want to get something from you."

"Yeah, they make you believe that they love you at first but then they leave you as if nothing," added another of the animals of that meddling group. "Even later you'll get bored and go to get better girls than her."

The group of animals began to laugh in a mocking way, which caused Diddy and the circus animals to make a gesture of disgust for their intrusive comments.

"Don't listen to them, little monkey, they're crackpots," one of the circus elephants whispered to Diddy. "Come, let's talk there."

The group of circus animals took Diddy to another more private corner so they could talk to him better without interruptions.

"Well, Diddy, why don't you tell Dixie your feelings now?" the elephant asked quietly.

"Well... yes, I've tried, but I never get it," Diddy replied with some embarrassment. "It's that... I'm always afraid of what might happen after I tell her."

"Have you been friends for a long time?" asked the gorilla of the circus.

"Yes. We're best friends, in fact."

"But has there never been any *special* moment between you both?" the elephant asked before pausing. "Maybe something like a kiss or some affectionate gesture?"

Instantly, Diddy felt the famous "butterflies in his stomach" reach his heart when he was asked that question. He got a few faint blushes on his face that even the circus animals noticed.

"Does that face mean yes?" asked the tiger, astonished along with the other animals.

"W-Well, actually..." Diddy replied, smiling nervously at the attack of questions. "I could say that... maybe."

"Oh, that's nice!" exclaimed the animals of the circus in a touching tone.

"And so, what are you waiting for?" the gorilla said with emotion. "You should tell her your feelings at once, so that you two take the first step."

"B-but I can't, I don't know what words to use," Diddy said, confused. "I can't be... 'romantic', so to speak... Or how do you think I should tell her?"

"Oh, Diddy, Diddy, I think words are the least of it," said the tiger, cheering him on. "Look, you just have to be honest, I don't think you should worry about telling her nice words that only serve as an ornament, just tell her *what you feel* and that's all."

"Besides, I think she likes you too," the gorilla added quietly. "We even have noticed also how she looks at you and how she treats you."

"Yeah, maybe she's waiting for you too," the elephant added. "Cheer up, tell her. Don't leave her confused."

"But do you think it's a good idea to tell her that in this situation?" Diddy asked them in confusion. "I mean, while we're on this island and looking for our way home?"

"Well, I don't think it's an excuse," replied the tiger. "If she really loves you, she'll reciprocate without pretexts. In addition, both are alone, what better time can there not be. You can even ask her later to be your girlfriend."

"What?! But..." exclaimed Diddy, even more nervous just thinking about it. "I don't know what it's like to be a boyfriend. What would that be like?"

The group of animals were silent for a while and looked at each other before responding.

"Well... It doesn't look so difficult if you both enjoy it and are sure of what you want," the tiger replied. "It would be almost the same as being friends. But of course, it would be a more special friendship, and *friendship* means that you must respect each other, be honest, loyal and empathetic, and of course, you can also give your kisses and loving gestures. That's all you need... I guess."

"Yeah, I don't think it's that complicated," the gorilla added. "You would just have to live it and have each of you do things right. I think love shouldn't be difficult."

Diddy, after listening to them, became more confused. But at the same time, he saw all the advantages he had, since, being the two alone on the island, any time would be perfect to confess his feelings to Dixie. In those moments, he wished Donkey was there, since he was always the one who gave him the most advice and cheered him up. But anyway, he felt good after listening to the circus animals, in fact, he felt much better having talked to them.

"And by the way, Diddy, if you two become anything, *always* be honest with her," the elephant added. "Make her feel that she can trust you, and make sure she does the same with you."

"Wow. Where have you learned that from?" Diddy asked them, looking at them with some strangeness and smiling at them at the same time.

"Well, we don't know anything about love," the animals replied with small laughs. "But it's what we think it's."

On the other hand, Dixie was also with another group of animals gathering fruit. She was also helping them in the work, and felt more confident with the animals that had been in the circus.

"Hey, Dixie, I have a question," said one of the lions from the circus. "Is there anything *special* between you and Diddy?"

"What do you mean?" Dixie asked in confusion as she gathered fruits from a tree and put them in a cart.

"You know, if by any chance... you two are a couple or something."

In the same way, Dixie was invaded by those unforeseen emotions when she was asked something like that.

"Uh... No, he's just my friend," Dixie replied, trying not to smile from nerves.

"But do you like him?" one of the rhinos asked her with a look of curiosity.

Dixie just fell silent as she smiled and blushed little by little.

"Come on, don't lie, that face says a lot," said the lion, giving her little pushes.

"Well... Uh," Dixie replied, trying not to laugh at the nerves. "What if I told you that... I do?"

"Aha! I knew it!" exclaimed one of the zebras from the circus. "We've seen the way you look at him and how you treat him, that's why we had that doubt."

"In fact, we can see that he too... *likes you*," said the lion, raising his eyebrows. "He's also very noticeable. Has he never told you he likes you?"

"Well, no, actually... sometimes I've tried to give him some sign to do it, but he doesn't get it," Dixie said, shrugging and sighing. "And he also denies it when others ask him if he likes me."

"Wow! Talking about boys, little girl?" said a random gorilla girl, intruding on the conversation along with four others. "The guys are complete liars; they just want to have fun with you and then leave you."

"Yeah, they go around with one girl, then another, and then another, and they forget about you. They're idiots," added another. "Therefore, don't waste your time, you'll find even better guys than him."

Dixie and the circus animals made a gesture of disgust at the comments of those nosy gorilla females, while they laughed in a mocking way.

"Don't listen to them, Dixie, they're crazy," the zebra whispered to Dixie. "Let's go this way."

The group of circus animals separated from the rest of the animals and joined Dixie in another corner to be able to talk more privately about the topic.

"Well, Dixie, have you been good friends with Diddy for a long time?" asked the rhino.

"Well, I can say yes," Dixie replied, smiling. "For a long time."

"Have you ever had any special moment like a kiss or anything like that?" the lion asked her in a curious tone.

Dixie felt her nerves immediately activate upon hearing that question. Instantly, she remembered *those moments* she had spent with Diddy, and she couldn't help but smile and blush little by little.

"Well... The truth is..." Dixie replied, smiling shyly. "I could also say that... Maybe so."

"Wow! So, what are you waiting for?" the rhino exclaimed with emotion. "You've already earned it, why don't you tell him you like him?"

"Yes, don't leave him confused," the lion added in the same way. "He must be waiting for you."

"W-what?! Me?" Dixie exclaimed in confusion. "No, no, no. Shouldn't he be the one to tell me?"

"Oh, Dixie, please! Let's see... Did you say that you always gave him signals to tell you?" the zebra asked, to which Dixie nodded. "Well, I don't think that with hints like that it'll be possible to take a first step. In addition, Diddy must get very nervous and it must be difficult for him to get the courage to tell you. Just have a little more patience."

"Or rather, *you* should be a little more direct with him and help him not be afraid to tell you," the rhino added.

"And if he still can't tell you, so tell him!" said the lion. "He shouldn't always be the one to always take the first steps either."

"B-but..." Dixie replied before crossing her arms, "if I tell him, he might think I'm too hasty or something."

"Oh, come on, Dixie," continued the rhino. "Only a braggart idiot would think so; Diddy doesn't look like he's one of those guys. If Diddy really loves you, he'll just reciprocate... And he will feel great about you."

"By the way," added the zebra, "I think *you have* to get out of your head the idea that only he should take the first step. That sounds cute, but I don't really think it's. You can also do things for him; he'll even thank you if he's really for you."

Dixie only thought about it for a while, as she always had the idea that Diddy should take the first step. But thinking about it now, the animals might be right... He wouldn't have to be the only one who could have initiative, either; maybe she could do something about that situation too... Even though just thinking about it made her nervous. At that time, she wished her sister and cousins were there, since they always cheered her up in a situation like that, even if she didn't really have anyone else to listen to her and advise her in situations like that. Anyway, she felt heard by the circus animals.

"It doesn't sound bad what you're saying," Dixie said, smiling a little. "I thank you for that."

"And a very important thing," added the lion before finishing. "*Always* make sure you feel comfortable with him and can tell him how you feel, whether it's something good or bad. And likewise, you must make him feel the same way about you."

"Are you experts in love or where did you get all this?" Dixie asked, looking at them strangely and with a few small laughs.

"Well, we don't know anything," replied the animals, all shrugging and in the same tone. "But... that is the most logical thing we can think of to say."

It was mid-afternoon. After a long day of picking fruit, the animals took a break. Some of them took naps, while others met in groups to talk. Diddy and Dixie were also gathered with them.

Later, Dixie needed some time to reflect, so she went out for a while to walk outside the shelter. Minutes later, she went to a not-so-distant tree, climbed up to one of the branches and sat there for a long time.

Even though she was only thinking about how they would get back home recently, the latest events that happened only made Dixie's thoughts occupied by... *Diddy*. She didn't want to think about love matters in the middle of a situation of being stranded on an island without knowing how to return to DK Island, but it was inevitable; she couldn't stop thinking about him and what might happen between the two of them, even if they returned to DK Island.

"Uhh... Dixie," suddenly, Diddy appeared on the same branch of the tree, interrupting the thread of her thoughts.

"Uh, hi, Diddy," Dixie replied, smiling at him, trying to be calm in his presence.

"Can I... stay here?" Diddy asked somewhat shyly.

"Why not?"

Diddy sat next to Dixie, trying not to make eye contact with her, as he was also nervous. Both stood for a few minutes in silence and looking towards the horizon; neither of them wanted to look at each other's faces at the time.

Diddy had come there to make his umpteenth attempt to tell Dixie how he feels about her; he swore that this time he did feel more than ready... But again, he was as usual, with nerves well active.

"Dixie," he said, still not turning to look at her.

"Yeah, Diddy?" she replied in the same position.

"Why don't you look at me?"

"Because you're not doing it either."

A few seconds later, they both turned to see each other again. As soon as they saw each other, they let out a little laughter at the same time. Diddy, despite having all the nerves invading him, knew it would have to be at that moment.

"Oh, it's okay, Dixie, I..." he said again, getting serious, "I actually have something important to tell you."

Suddenly, Dixie felt a little acceleration in her heart... Deep down, she was trying to guess what maybe Diddy wanted to tell her, and she wanted to think she was right.

"What are you going to tell me? About you like my pyramid?" Dixie joked so she could control her nerves.

"Hey, no, forget that," Diddy replied with a laugh. Then, he returned to a normal posture and decided to continue. "Okay, Dixie, is that... Well... I was going to tell you that... if you have already finished your boat."

"The boat? Well, not yet," Dixie replied in confusion. But then, she realized that Diddy was just digressing from the topic. "That wasn't what you wanted to tell me, was it?"

Diddy was silent and surprised at how Dixie had straightened the topic back out to him.

"Oh, okay, yes, you guessed right. But I was going to ask you that too," Diddy said, smiling nervously, before taking a sigh. "Okay, Dixie, so... Last night when you asked me... What I really meant is that I..."

Diddy remained silent and only tried to hide a face of frustration. Dixie could feel how the situation was going and was now almost sure what he meant; she also remembered those tips that the circus animals told her. She settled down to face Diddy so she could talk to him better.

"Diddy..." Dixie said, getting closer to him and placing her hands on his shoulders. "*Whatever* you have to tell me, just do it... I won't get mad if that's what you think I'll do," she added, smiling,

trying to reassure him.

Diddy only grew more nervous; he was starting to blush so much that even Dixie noticed it and she tried not to laugh. Even so, with Dixie's last words, he felt a little more confident. He took a heavy breath before blurting out what he would have to say.

"Actually, I lik-" but for the umpteenth time... he didn't manage it.

He made another sneaky gesture of frustration to the point of wanting to give up. Dixie stared at him with some strangeness... But then, she thought that maybe she could end the matter once and for all.

"Diddy..." she said before pausing as she felt nerves running inside her. "I... I like you... You like me too, right?"

Diddy opened his eyes intensely immediately. He was paralyzed and shocked and for a while confused by what he had just heard from Dixie. He wanted to make sure he wasn't imagining or dreaming at what she had said.

"T-that's what you wanted to tell me, right?" Dixie asked, smiling somewhat shyly. "Well... I did know, Diddy."

Diddy looked at her paralyzed as he finished processing what she had said... What had Dixie just said?

"W-what?! You... Did you know that..."

"Well... yes, the truth is that yes," Dixie replied nervously and looking down with some embarrassment.

"B-but... How?! I thought... So, all this time... you *knew it*?" exclaimed Diddy, still being so confused and not finished processing.

"Yes, Diddy," she reaffirmed, not wanting to look at him. "In fact... why do you think I gave you that gift with the emerald and our photo?"

Diddy was still, astonished, and confused at once; Dixie knew all the time about his feelings?... And even so he hadn't dared to tell her?

"And... How did you know?" Diddy asked, looking at her strangely and shyly at the same time.

"In fact, it was those four stupid kids from school who told me."

"What?!" Diddy exclaimed even more shocked. "Wait, wait! And how did they know too?!"

"Do you remember that days before Mr. Pinky arrived at school you had lost your notebook? So, those fools had stolen it from you and showed me a page where you had written my name in a heart. I didn't want to believe them, but then I started to look closely at how you were when you were with me and so I could believe it."

Diddy was all paralyzed and confused. He clearly remembered that time where he wished Dixie hadn't seen that page of his notebook, but... actually, she had seen it.

"Oh, those stupid ones! As always, they get into what they shouldn't care about!" Diddy said annoyed, remembering those bully children. "But, well... so... Yes, that's what I always tried to tell you, Dixie," he added, smiling shyly and scratching his head.

"I know, sometimes I have noticed it. Even when I went to your house to make the pyramids, I clearly heard Donkey say: *'When she arrives, why don't you tell her you like her?'*"

Diddy didn't know how to feel at all at that moment, maybe relieved that he finally confessed his feelings to Dixie... or maybe frustrated to see how hard he tried to tell her so that she has known it since recent times.

"By the way, Diddy..." Dixie added before reciprocating with some shyness. "I like you too... for a long time, seriously."

Diddy felt his heart beat again in a racing way, while smiling with an emotion never felt by him before. That feeling he would have liked to have had a week ago, and so perhaps they would have avoided all the journey they had had so far.

"R-really?" Diddy asked, starting to look excited, still can't believe it. Although then he became serious. "One minute!... But if you knew, why didn't you tell me anything?"

"I was nervous, too, Diddy," replied Dixie. "Several times I gave you signals, but you never caught it, you always denied it and that made me feel bad. And also... I thought you should be the one to tell me; I didn't want you to think that I would be very hasty if I did it first," she finished looking embarrassed.

"Oh, Dixie, please, I wouldn't think that of you," Diddy replied with a look of weirdness. "That is, I have also been waiting for you for a long time; I tried several times to tell you but I could not. Besides, that's also why I went out that night, you know... I was very hurt about Jemky's matter, and much more when you said we weren't going to be friends anymore... and about the pyramid."

"I know, Diddy," Dixie said somewhat pitied and embarrassed before sighing. "And I'm sorry, I didn't want to make you feel that way and for everything to get to this point; you know what that orangutan did. Even the last day we went to the waterfalls, I planned to confess to you with a note I had in a small box, but that idiot took it from me and threw it away."

"What? Really?" exclaimed Diddy, looking astonished. "Heavens, why didn't I know this before?... Oh, but after all... I think we can't worry about that anymore now," he added, shrugging, before smiling a little again. "Anyway, and now, what do we do?"

"Well... keeping looking for DK Island, I guess?" replied Dixie, smiling back.

The two smiled at each other for a moment, until later... Dixie gave Diddy a kiss on the cheek which caught him by surprise. Diddy stood still, while blushing intensely, and Dixie laughed somewhat shy upon noticing it. Diddy then smiled at her and stroked her cheek, before she got closer to hug him. He reciprocated the embrace and they stayed that way for a few seconds while each felt as if the universe was in their favor for having been reciprocated. Now, there would be no feelings to hide, and that was a great relief for both of us.

When they separated from the embrace, they stared into each other's eyes. Until later, Diddy got closer to Dixie, and she did the same.

"Wait a minute, Dixie," Diddy said, pausing. "I wanted to tell you that... sorry if I didn't have the courage to confess this to you before... I didn't even know how to do it and I was afraid of what would happen next."

"No, no, it's okay, Diddy," Dixie replied, smiling at him the same way, though a little embarrassed. "And sorry too if I couldn't do it either... even when I had all the opportunity and almost we lost it."

"No, don't worry," Diddy added, smiling and intertwining his hands with hers. "I mean... I can't blame you when I didn't know how to do it right either. But now... we have already said it."

They stood face to face again, looking into each other's eyes carefully. Diddy took both hands of Dixie delicately while smiling at her; the sign of what was going to happen was very clear. He got closer to her again while they both blushed; it was about to happen *that* for the third time. They got closer and, with their faces less than five centimeters apart, Diddy began to close his eyes, and Dixie was going to do the same. Until...

"Wait a minute!" Dixie said, stopping suddenly and looking in the other direction. "What's that over there?"

Dixie pointed to a point towards the sea that could be seen from the height of the tree where they were. Diddy turned to look where she was aiming.

"What?"

"Isn't that..."

Diddy's eyes widened as he saw what Dixie was seeing; he thought it would be a mirage or a dream, but no... It looked pretty much like it was.

"*DK Island!*" exclaimed Diddy, instantly excited and standing up.

"*It must be that!*" Dixie added with the same emotion.

"*We found it!*" said the two at the same time and, then, gave each other a big hug of celebration.

Apparently, DK Island was in sight. From the branch of the tree where the kongs were, they could see in the middle of the sea mist, a miniature island that had the exact shape of Donkey Kong's head, which was the main feature of that island. Diddy and Dixie jumped with excitement to see that they had finally located DK Island.

"Come on, we have to go see it closer!" Diddy exclaimed, still excited.

The two kongs got off the tree and rushed to the direction where they had seen what appeared to be DK Island. They crossed several trees and branches until they reached the shores of the beach. Both were now more excited than ever.

When they arrived, they stopped to get a better look at that distant silhouette similar to DK Island. Indeed, it was very similar... if not for a dark color with which it was also seen.

"Are you sure it's DK Island?" Diddy asked, beginning to have doubts.

"Of course, it's the same shape," Dixie replied, though truth be told, she wasn't so sure after taking a closer look at it. "But we can find out if we head to it."

"Do you still have the boat you were making?"

"Of course, I left it there. Let's go!"

Diddy and Dixie headed in the direction Dixie indicated. They went to the same place where the day before she was trying to build the boat, which was not so far away.

"Here it is, there's a few pieces left, and that's all," Dixie said as she took a detailed look at the boat.

"Hey, not bad," Diddy said, climbing into the boat. "It's much better than the umpteenth boats I made."

"That happens to you for telling me that yours was going to be better than mine," Dixie replied mockingly and giving him a little push.

"Hey, forget that!" exclaimed Diddy in the same way and returned the push.

Both began to laugh and play together, even chasing each other in the sand. It continued that way until Diddy stopped his laughter suddenly as he adopted an expression as if he had seen something from another world.

"Wait, wait! *W-what?!?*" he said in a trembling voice looking in one direction toward the trees.

"What? What's up, Diddy?" Dixie asked, looking at him strangely, and then looked where he was pointing.

Suddenly, Dixie also adopted the same expression as him... She stood still not knowing if they were seeing the same thing or it was just a mirage. The two wondered if perhaps all the journey of the last week had not left them crazy and so each time they happened or saw more unexpected things.

"No, it's not possible," Diddy said, still not recovering his normal state. "A-are you seeing the same thing I do?!"

Among the trees in front of their sight was walking an *ape* that they had met not long ago, but that in that short time had been a headache for them.

"Isn't that one... *Mr...* "

"... *Pinky?!?*"

Indeed, that new teacher was what they were seeing. They had never expected it, much less on an unknown island.

"B-But what is he doing here? How did he get there?" Diddy stuttered without recovering from the impact.

"And I don't know," Dixie added in the same tone. "What if maybe... someone told him we were here and so he's searching for us?"

"But no one apart from the zoo animals knows about us; how could he get to the same island we are on?"

Both were stunned not knowing how he could be on that island, which they reached because of a storm, and it was almost impossible for anyone outside that island to know that they were there.

"What if we go to greet him and ask him if he doesn't know anything about the way back to DK Island?" Dixie suggested.

"You're right! If he came from there, it must be obvious he knows how to get there," Diddy added with a smile again. "Come on, let's talk to him!"

Diddy and Dixie headed towards Mr. Pinky. They hid behind some bushes and watched him for a few minutes. He was walking serenely around the site and stretching his limbs, as if he were taking time to get some fresh air. He was even wearing casual clothes instead of his formal suit jacket.

"Uhh, but you talk to him first," Dixie whispered with a little fear from behind the bush.

"What? No, no, no. You speak to him first," Diddy objected with the same fear.

"No, no, I don't want to; you talk to him."

"Dixie, I can't talk to him, not after what happened on the last day of school," Diddy replied. "What's more, I can't even see that teacher face to face again."

"Don't worry about that anymore, Diddy, I already told him not to fail you and I explained the situation."

"But I also threw the pyramid at Jemky."

"I explained that the pyramid was yours and what those four stupid kids are like," Dixie replied. "Go on, I can't talk to that grumpy and angry ape."

"*Say what?!*" exclaimed a voice that came from neither of them.

Diddy and Dixie turned their gazes to the side and realized that the same Mr. Pinky was staring at them less than a meter away from them. The two of them froze and felt the nerves at almost the same magnitude as when something happened between the two of them.

"H-hello..." Diddy and Dixie stuttered at the same time and smiled nervously at the big ape.

Mr. Pinky also slowly adopted a face as if he were seeing something from another dimension. Apparently, he also didn't expect to meet again with two of his students who had been declared missing on DK Island, much less on the same island where he was.

"No... Mr. Diddy and Miss Dixie? Really... are you?" the teacher stuttered to the point of almost wanting to faint. "No, no, no, maybe I'm crazy or my blood pressure goes up," he added, turning around and closing his eyes tightly as he squeezed his temple.

"Uhh, yes... it's us, mister," Dixie said, standing up but still shaking nerves.

"You are alive!" the teacher immediately exclaimed, turning back to them and changing his expression to one of joy. "I t-thought something terrible had happened to you two! *But you are alive!*"

The teacher placed his hands on each one's shoulders and waved them with happiness; His face was as if he were that of a father who had found his missing children. It was a face that Diddy and Dixie had never seen and could not imagine seeing in him.

"But how did you get here?!" the teacher asked them in the same tone of astonishment.

"Well, we were going to ask you the same thing, sir," Dixie replied with a forced smile.

"I live here on this island," said the teacher before speaking quickly. "How did you get here? Mr. Diddy, had you been kidnapped by a thief? And then to you, Miss Dixie? Everyone on DK Island is *worried about* you! A little more and they could declare you dead!"

"No, no, we can explain!" Dixie said, calming the teacher.

"Before you continue, Miss Dixie, I am not a *grumpy and angry ape*," he replied, giving her a warning look.

"Uhh, I'm sorry, I didn't mean it in bad terms," Dixie excused somewhat embarrassedly.

"And Mr. Diddy, don't be afraid of me; Miss Dixie has already clarified everything that happened."

"Uhh, yeah... Yes, I knew," Diddy replied, also embarrassed immediately.

"Now, tell me, hadn't a thief taken you away? Or did four of your classmates do something to you?"

"No, no, it was nothing like that," Dixie clarified. "Diddy had been kidnapped by circus tamers and taken to a *zoo*."

"A zoo?!" exclaimed the teacher, shocked.

"Yes, and then they took me to train for a circus," Diddy added. "That place looked like fun, but no, it was a terrible prison. And not to mention those tamers; calling them *evil* is too small."

"Yeah, can you believe that they whipped all the animals and locked them up all day? Oh, and they literally exterminated them if they rebelled or didn't follow their orders."

"Holy heavens!" exclaimed the teacher, showing more shock with what they were telling him. "I've heard that those places are hellish. And... how did you get out of there?"

"Well, Diddy spent most of his time locked up. I was an infiltrator looking for a way to get him out, so I stole the keys from those tamers and released him."

"And you're not going to believe us, but we released all the animals from there," Diddy added. "It was all a chaos in that city, but we did it."

"In fact, the animals are in a shelter near here," Dixie said, pointing in one direction.

"Did you really do that? It's... impressive!" the teacher was much more surprised and confused at the same time. "Wait, so the animals that are now in the shelter are those from that zoo you mention?"

"That's right, they're the same," Diddy replied. "Wait! Do you know that shelter?"

"Oh, of course. In fact, the owners are very good friends of mine," the teacher told them. "By the way, I had been told that a pair of little monkeys had rescued all those animals, but I thought it was a story invented by them. I never imagined it would be about *you*."

Diddy and Dixie were surprised; in addition to the fact that Mr. Pinky lived on that same island, he also knew the apes who owned the shelter and had even interacted with them.

"And when did you get here?" Dixie asked later.

"A couple of days ago," replied the teacher. "I was going to stay longer on DK Island to help the others search for you, but I had to go back because the hurricane season at sea was already starting and then I would have to wait three months for it to pass, even the boat where I was going almost suffered a shipwreck. By the way, you saved all those zoo animals, but... why are you here too?"

"Well, that's it," Diddy replied, "a storm and giant waves swept us here when we were on our way back to DK Island... Wow, that explains why it was so windy offshore."

"And how is everyone on DK Island?" Dixie asked worriedly.

"Until the moment I was there, they were all fine, but at the same time they were not," replied the teacher, looking at them with concern as well. "You couldn't imagine how worried they are about you. Well, they started conducting a massive community search since Miss Dixie didn't show up either, and everyone points to a thief hanging around. In fact... they have not yet been able to solve the case of the boy who was injured and found in the river. They don't know if the child lives or has already died, but they assure that as soon as they find the culprit, they *will make him pay no matter what*."

"Oh, too bad... *Poor boy*," Dixie said, looking sideways at Diddy and pretending to know nothing about it.

"Yes, I don't understand how someone could be so atrocious to do that to a child," Mr. Pinky added, looking very pitied, while Diddy and Dixie only concealed their looks. "Although I have some doubts about what you told us before you left, Miss Dixie."

Dixie felt an acceleration in her heartbeat as she began to turn pale; it crossed her mind that perhaps Mr. Pinky had certain suspicions of her regarding Jemky's case.

"Since you said that your other classmates were carrying weapons, perhaps... weren't they the ones who did that to one of them?" Mr. Pinky speculated.

"Uhh, I don't think so, the four of them were friends, how could they attack each other?"

"But who knows," Diddy added, going with the flow. "Those four were deranged... And by the way, haven't you heard about them again?"

"No, they disappeared too, actually," replied the teacher. "They never went to pick up their certificates or talk about their remedial classes either. I was going to look for their parents, but I don't know them; they are from another island and nobody knows them. It's said that only Mrs. Wrinkly barely knows the father of one of them, who was the one who registered them... Although I don't know what kind of parents these kids have with those behaviors it says they had. Even... I would think that the wounded child might have been Mr. Rocky; all claimed that the boy had light fur on his head."

"Well, by the way... do you know how to get back to DK Island?" Dixie asked, trying to change the topic.

"Not exactly, I was asleep on the road," replied the teacher. "And not to mention that we had to go another route because we were almost caught by hurricanes."

"Well, we think we found DK Island," Diddy added, smiling.

"Really? Where?"

"Come and see," Dixie said, inviting him.

Diddy and Dixie took the teacher's arm, and then the three of them headed to the shores of the beach. They both took him to see the location where they had located DK Island... Although he was not as surprised as they were, and only limited himself to folding his arms when they showed it.

"That's not DK Island," said Mr. Pinky, very confident. "It's just a giant rock."

"What are you saying? Of course it's!" Dixie reaffirmed. "It's shaped like Donkey Kong."

"And by the way, Mr. Pinky, we want to try to go back today," Diddy added.

"What?!" exclaimed the teacher.

"Yeah, in fact, we even have a boat almost ready to set sail," Dixie added with emotion.

Suddenly, Mr. Pinky began to look at them with extreme strangeness and frowning sternly: the same expression they saw when he taught them.

"Hey, are you serious?" said the teacher, placing his hands at their sides. "That is... Haven't you also heard about hurricanes?"

"But we don't see any traces of hurricanes there," Dixie said. "I don't think anything will happen."

"How could it not? Everyone here knows that," replied the teacher. "In this storm season you can't sail."

"Hey, but we have to," Diddy replied with a shrug. "We can't let any more time pass without returning to our island, so we're leaving."

"No, no, no, you are wrong," said Mr. Pinky, shaking his head from side to side. "First, I'm almost sure that that's *not* DK Island, since that is quite far from here, moreover, from here you can't even see it. And second, you know how dangerous it would be to sail the seas at this time."

"Don't worry, we'll be more careful this time," Diddy said confidently. "In addition, we have to return as soon as possible to DK Island; we don't want to worry everyone anymore or keep them thinking that a thief is hanging around."

"Hey, but you can't just leave like that, it's dangerous!" replied the teacher, looking at them strangely. "You would even have to wait about three months to be able to sail well!"

"But we're not going to spend three months here, it's a long time!" Dixie replied.

"But I repeat that it is dangerous! You can get lost or drown!" replied the teacher, beginning to raise his voice. "What's more, just look at what the weather looks like over there!" he added, pointing to the mist of the horizon.

"But we have to go back!" Diddy replied. "What are the other kongs there going to think? That did we die?"

"No, no, no, enough buts! You can't leave like this! *And understand, it's very dangerous!*"

"*But don't yell at us!*" Diddy and Dixie said, raising their voices at the same time. "*We will leave!*"

Mr. Pinky stared at them sternly for a few seconds, until a while later, he only gave a few small laughs.

"Well, whatever you want. Try it," he said, resigned and still laughing a little. "Anyway, I bet you won't even get more than ten meters away from here to the sea... I'll see you later, guys."

Without further discussion, Mr. Pinky abandoned the conversation and left. Diddy and Dixie gave withering glances behind his back, and only thought it was a bad idea to have greeted him.

"He's still arrogant," Dixie commented in disgust. "He really is a grumpy ape."

"Bah! Let's not listen to him, let's continue with the boat," Diddy suggested with a shrug.

"Yeah, we'll leave anyway."

"What a bad vibe to have run into him. We shouldn't have even spoken to him."

Diddy and Dixie, completely ignoring Mr. Pinky, headed back to where the boat was. They continued to prepare it to be able to sail it, and there were only some pieces left such as seats or oars, in addition to a deck. It took them a couple more hours to assemble it completely, and it was already getting dark...

Chapter 32: A Returning Plan

Night had fallen, and Diddy along with Dixie already had their boat almost ready to ride it. They knew the danger they were going to be exposed to, but it was their only alternative if they wanted to return home as soon as possible. They couldn't wait to set foot on DK Island again and see all their friends and family again... Much less were they going to wait three long months on another island that, although they had met many acquaintances there, didn't feel at home at all.

Diddy and Dixie were heading back to the animal shelter, as it was going to be dinner time and they had been invited.

"Will we tell the rest of the animals that we are leaving?" Dixie asked as she walked along with Diddy.

"I would like to tell them, but they are sure to stop us."

"You're right, and they are quite a few."

"Or we could secretly tell the circus guys; they're more understanding," Diddy added before pausing. "Not like that *grumpy ape*."

"*I bet you won't get more than ten meters away from here to the sea,*" Dixie imitated him.

The two began to laugh when referring to Mr. Pinky's attitude; they had decided not to take importance of his opposition.

Minutes later, they arrived at where the other animals were. Everyone was gathered at the table as on previous occasions. Diddy and Dixie went to sit near the circus animals, as they were a little more confident with them than the rest. While they were having dinner, they were also talking.

"How are you doing, little monkeys?" one of the elephants greeted them cheerfully.

"All right," Dixie replied along with Diddy, looking cheerful. "This day has been quiet."

"I see you very excited, huh?" a zebra told them. "Has anything new happened?"

Diddy and Dixie looked at each other smiling and beckoned to each other so they could talk.

"Well, we have something to tell you, but... *only you*," Diddy said, whispering his last words.

"Don't go telling anyone else this," Dixie added in the same way.

"What about?" one of the tigers asked them curiously. "Are you already a couple?"

"Hey!" one of the gorillas whispered, elbowing the tiger. "Don't be reckless!"

Diddy and Dixie just looked at each other with some shyness, and then laughed while blushing a little at that assumption.

"No, it's not that," Diddy replied. "What happens is that... *we're going to our island later*," he added, whispering in the last sentence.

Instantly, the animals looked at them in much the same way as when they were told they were going to be taken out of the circus or as if they were a pair of children playing at being explorers.

"What are you talking about?! Are you going to leave?!"

"You're kidding, aren't you?"

"No, seriously, we even have a boat ready," Dixie said. "But don't tell others, or else they'll stop us."

"Hey, but what about hurricanes and whirlpools?!" replied the animals in a low voice.

"I know, but we must return to our island as soon as we can," Diddy added.

"But you're going to get lost or something bad can happen to you, did you go crazy?"

"Don't worry, we've located DK Island," Dixie reaffirmed. "And we didn't see any big waves along the way."

Suddenly, Diddy and Dixie could hear the apes who owned the shelter as if they were greeting someone important. They turned to look at them and saw that someone had arrived whom for the moment they didn't want to see again: Mr. Pinky.

"Oh, no, and now what did that gentleman come for?" asked Diddy quietly.

"I hope he didn't come looking for us," Dixie added, rolling her eyes.

"Yes, there are those two monkeys," the shelter owners were heard in the distance indicating to the teacher.

The apes who owned the shelter pointed to where Diddy and Dixie were, and immediately Mr. Pinky began to head to them. The two became tense as he came walking.

"Oh, no, here he comes! Don't look at him!" Diddy whispered to Dixie. They both turned their gazes away, pretending not to have seen the teacher at all.

"Do you know that male ape?" the circus animals asked them.

"Yes, he was our new teacher at school," Dixie said, her head turned as did Diddy. "Don't look at him either."

Half a minute later, Mr. Pinky had reached where Diddy and Dixie were. Neither of them dared to look at him and kept their gazes to the opposite side, as if they were observing something apart.

"Hey, hello, Mr. Diddy and Miss Dixie," the teacher pronounced. "How are you doing? I need to talk to you."

"Ah, hello, Mr. Pinky, how are you?" replied Diddy and Dixie, pretending they had just seen him.

"Well, first of all, I was going to apologize for the disagreement this afternoon," the teacher said with a seriousness and formality. "And I was also going to ask if you still have your plan to return to DK Island standing."

"Well, not anymore, we've given up trying," Dixie said, turning to wink at Diddy. "*Right, Diddy?*"

"Ahh, yeah, yes... we won't do that anymore," Diddy added, going with the flow. "We've decided better to stay here until those hurricanes get finished."

"Oh, that's good. Because I had a proposal," the teacher told them before pausing. "I can help you".

"Really?!" exclaimed Diddy and Dixie in unison, before the teacher nodded.

The two kongs changed their faces immediately, looked at each other and now they were surprised at the last words of the teacher, that for a moment all fear of him disappeared and they even became somewhat excited.

"Are you going to take us to DK Island?!"

"Are you going to take the monkeys, Pinky?" asked the apes who owned the shelter, arriving at the conversation. "What about hurricanes?"

"Oh, no, no, I think you misunderstood," Mr. Pinky clarified with a small laugh. "I meant that I can help and take them to live temporarily in one of the pieces of the tree in my house, until the hurricanes get finished."

Diddy and Dixie almost choked on their meals upon hearing that and opened their eyes entirely; they felt as if they had been given a huge illusion and then dropped abruptly.

"I have some empty rooms in the tree of my house where they could stay," the teacher added. "They are isolated rooms, so you can have your own space, don't worry."

"Uhh, Mr. Pinky... you don't have to worry about it," Diddy immediately excused with a forced smile. "We'll be fine here in the shelter."

"Oh, guys, it happens that many animals arrive in this shelter and soon there won't be enough space," the teacher explained. "It's in case you need to be more comfortable with an exclusive space for you."

"Well, it is true," added the shelter owners. "Today some animals have already left, and surely tomorrow more ones will come. But, of course, obviously you can continue to come to visit us, little ones, don't hesitate."

"Besides, you must keep waiting," the teacher added. "To go at this time to DK Island you would need a large and sturdy boat, or else, you could suffer an accident at sea."

"And... since when could we go to your house, mister?" asked Dixie, concealing her disagreement.

"It may be tonight," replied the professor. "And don't worry, you can keep visiting your friends here whenever you want. You'll only have your own sleeping space."

Both Diddy and Dixie looked at each other with sneaky gestures of disagreement, while still keeping in mind their plan to return to DK Island in any way. Meanwhile, the animals continued to talk.

As Diddy and Dixie finished eating, they headed towards a corner of the shelter. Both with the same looks of disagreement for what they had just been told.

"And now what do we do?" Dixie whispered. "I don't want to go to Mr. Pinky's house. I mean, maybe we have better privacy and can sleep better in a house, but I don't want to see the face of that grumpy ape on a daily basis."

"Neither do I," Diddy added in the same way. "Imagine how overbearing he must be in his own home... Oh, and anyway, we can't abandon our plan to return to DK Island either."

"Perhaps that the sea wouldn't be as dangerous as we are told. I think we can go deep to search for DK Island."

Suddenly, Mr. Pinky appeared to them by surprise, so they stopped their conversation immediately.

"How are you doing, kids?" the teacher greeted them again formally. "What do you think of the idea? Or do you prefer to just stay here in this shelter?"

Diddy and Dixie looked at each other with enough doubts in answering, since it was clear... that they wanted neither; both only thought of their plan to return to DK Island no matter what.

"Ahh, well, mister, you'll see..." Diddy replied, wondering what to say. "What if we tell you we're already planning to go to-" he added before Dixie nudged him. "Your house! Uh, I mean... Yes, your house. Uhhh, we decided to go to your house."

"Okay, so you've decided," replied the teacher, smiling serenely. "If so, you can go tonight. I'll show you your space and you see if it seems comfortable."

"Ahh, yes, yes, of course," Dixie replied, going with the flow. "And... so to ask, how is your house? Is it comfortable to sleep?"

"Yes, of course, there is enough room for both of us," said the teacher. "You'll stay in a room for you; it has two hammocks and good ventilation during the day. In such a space you can have better privacy and even security."

"And by chance... Can we also go out whenever we want?" Diddy asked, smiling with his teeth.

"Of course, that's up to you. It's just there so you have your space to stay," the teacher replied smiling, before shifting to a seriousness and raising his gaze up. "Although yes, only be *careful* with going to dangerous places or making any *risky plan*."

"Ahhh, okay, so no problem," Diddy replied, keeping a forced smile and making sneaky glances with Dixie. "So, we are leaving with you."

"Okay, guys. So, I'll take you later. Just be ready."

Mr. Pinky nodded, before Diddy and Dixie followed suit. While he was already walking away, both only continued with forced smiles, which were fading little by little.

"And now what do we say to him?" Dixie whispered. "How do we tell him we don't even want to be on this island another day?"

"Let's tell him the truth... Or I don't know... Ugh, it's also that if we tell him, he may get angry or give us some speech with his grumpy voice."

"So, what do we do?" Dixie replied quietly. "That is, what about our plan we had?"

"Or let's just go with the flow and go with him to see what his house is like," Diddy said with a shrug. "Now what we have left... Although I think we'll have to tell him the truth along the way. Anyway, being there, we can leave more easily without anyone knowing that we went sailing."

"See you later, little monkeys!" said the shelter animals saying goodbye to Diddy and Dixie from a distance later. "Come back soon!"

"See you later!" replied Diddy and Dixie, although deep down, not wanting to leave there.

Diddy and Dixie showed a disagreement on their faces, as they walked next to Mr. Pinky. Indeed, he was going to take them home to keep them safe during the time they would have to stay on Hurricane Island. But the thought of having to see his face every day only gave them a headache; if they didn't want to see him at school, much less on a daily basis... Not to mention, both of them just wanted and thought about returning to DK Island, even just accompanying him to go with the flow.

"Hey, Mr. Pinky," Diddy said in his way. "You'll have to excuse us, and we thank you for your help with letting us stay in the tree of your house, but... Sorry, we lied to you. Yes, we still plan to return to DK Island right now."

"What are you talking about?" Mr. Pinky exclaimed, looking at them strangely instantly.

"Yes, it's true," Dixie added in the same posture as Diddy. "We were soon going to start our return journey, so you'll have to excuse us."

"Are you serious?!" Pinky said, holding his expression. "How can you leave?"

"Yes! We're going to go," Diddy interrupted. "Really excuse us, mister, but yes, we have our plan in place."

"Hey, kids, but what are you saying?" exclaimed Mr. Pinky, looking at them with shock. "That is, I don't want to discuss this with you anymore, but you know well that there are dangerous hurricanes now!"

"But you don't understand," replied Dixie. "We have been away from DK Island for a week, we need to go home, and everyone could be too worried about us."

"See, I understand that, but you can't sail the sea these days," the teacher reaffirmed.

"But we must go back no matter what!" Diddy replied with a look of pleading. "Everyone could be wondering about us."

"But now you can't sail!" the teacher exclaimed firmly. "The sea is dangerous right now!"

"But we need to go back!" Diddy replied.

"How would you feel if a child of yours was lost and you knew absolutely nothing about him?"

"Ugh! But get it! Just understand that the sea is very dangerous in this season!" exclaimed the teacher, raising his voice.

Diddy and Dixie were quiet, not to mention that they had been a little frightened by Mr. Pinky's tone of voice.

"Hey, excuse my tone, but that's what I'm trying to tell you, kids," the teacher said seriously. "And no, you can't sail at this time, understand."

After a long walk, the teacher along with the two kongs had reached his house; it wasn't that far from the shelter anyway. The house was located in a huge tree with abundant branches, had a very elegant and sophisticated cubic appearance, with a well-formed structure and very refined finishes. Around it had several low and medium plants, among them, crops of bananas and other fruits. Truth be told, it was a pretty and nice house.

"Come up, I'll show you your room."

Diddy and Dixie went up one by one to Mr. Pinky's house. The staircase was in the shape of a snail, which surrounded the trunk of the tree. Much of the house was at the top of the tree with a terrace at the top, while five other empty rooms were in different corners of the tree. A small empty room was in front of them at the same level of the porch where they were.

"Come in, please."

Both entered the room that Mr. Pinky indicated to them. It didn't look bad at all, in fact, it looked like a very cozy and sophisticated room that for a moment made the two little kongs smile.

"There are the hammocks so that you can sleep," the professor pointed out seriously. "Make yourselves comfortable, here you'll be during the wait until you can return to your island. I'll also give you food, by the way, don't worry."

"Okay... Thank you, Mr. Pinky," Diddy and Dixie replied with a forced smile.

"So, we'll stay here," Dixie added in the same way.

"And remember: *not going back to DK Island now*; it's very dangerous," the teacher warned them, pointing to them and raising his gaze up. "Beware you are going to take that enormous risk of sailing; I tell you seriously."

Having said all that, the professor withdrew from the room and left the two of them alone. Then, he went up to his other section of the house. For their part, Diddy and Dixie were quiet for a few seconds as they put on their disgusted faces again. Then, they both began to observe the room where they were.

"Hey, this place isn't bad," Diddy said, watching every corner of the room. "It looks comfortable to be able to sleep well."

"Yes, and besides, there are no more animals with lion snoring," Dixie added with small laughs.

"Although... who said we were going to sleep?" Diddy said firmly, to which Dixie got the idea.

"But how do we get out of here now? The door and large windows are closed."

"There's a small window up there," Diddy pointed in an upward direction. "We have to see how to go up."

Diddy and Dixie, still keeping their return plan standing, waited several minutes until no footsteps were heard in Mr. Pinky's house before they could leave. They took several random things in the room and stacked them towards the wall where there was a high window, to which they climbed. Dixie climbed up first, giving a boost with the help of her hair, and then helped Diddy up. Due to their short sizes, it was not difficult for them to pass through it. Finally, they were out of the house, ready to leave.

"We must go down quietly, otherwise Mr. Pinky will wake up," Dixie whispered.

"Let's go for those trees," Diddy said. "There he won't be able to see us."

The two climbed down quite stealthily from the tree, trying not to make any noise at all. When they arrived, they crawled through some bushes nearby, looking up every moment to make sure that Mr. Pinky had not discovered them. Being a little further away from the house, they began to run at speed in the middle of the trees, and headed towards the beach.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Pinky, but we have to go," Diddy said, turning to look at the house for the last time in the distance.

"Do you think he saw us?" Dixie questioned.

"I don't think so, and he's not going to find out," Diddy reaffirmed, smiling confidently.

Upon reaching the beach, Diddy and Dixie headed back to where the boat was. It was late at night and it was almost all dark, but with DK Island seemingly located, they felt more confident that they could start with the return from that very moment.

Before the boat set sail, the two went to pick up a few bananas to eat on the trip, as it was clear that it would be too extensive.

When they had everything ready, they began to push the boat towards the sea. It was a bit hard, but later they succeeded and then got into the boat to start paddling out to sea, fighting the waves. Minutes later, the waves stopped and, finally, they were sailing normally through the sea, watching now as Hurricane Island was moving farther and farther from their sight.

"We did it!" Dixie exclaimed with joy, hugging Diddy.

"Finally we're going home!" said Diddy, hugging her also with emotion.

"By the way, what will everyone say when they see that we are gone?"

"Don't worry, we did warn the circus animals that we were going to leave, so they will assume it. And now... we're going home at last!"

Finally, the pair of kongs had managed to continue their journey back to DK Island, just as they had planned... and hidden from Mr. Pinky and the rest of the animals, of course. Both of them finally felt calm and, in turn, were eager to reach DK Island. After several minutes of paddling, they were already sailing somewhat away from that Hurricane Island.

"Wait a minute," Dixie said, staring straight ahead, before making a gesture of surprise. "That's *not* DK Island."

"What? Don't say that, please," said Diddy, also observing that silhouette that was marked as 'DK Island'.

After a few more minutes of observation, they realized that that silhouette, indeed... *it wasn't* DK Island. It was just a giant rock that, looking at it a little closer, had a particular shape that seemed like Donkey Kong's head. Nor was it seen to have been as far from Hurricane Island as it looked.

"Ugh, it was just a rock!" Diddy complained in frustration. "What do we do now? Will we go back or what?"

"I don't think so, we can keep searching for DK Island since we're here," Dixie replied before starting to rub her arms and tremble. "Aren't you cold, by the way?"

"I was going to tell you the same thing," Diddy replied, beginning to tremble as well. "Oh, no... isn't that what I think it is?"

Suddenly, a cold winding wind was beginning to pronounce itself in the air, which, a few minutes later, was accompanied by raindrops that began to fall in increasing quantities.

"You know what? We better go back," Dixie said, still shivering from the cold and feeling somewhat uncomfortable with the environment. "This is getting a little ugly."

The two of them took the oars again and tried to turn around to return to the island. When suddenly, there was not only rain and cold air current, but also, waves began to collide with each other, causing the boat to begin to wobble. Diddy and Dixie recalled that the same phenomenon happened when the storm swept them to Hurricane Island. The two continued to paddle desperately back towards the island, but unfortunately, each wave that lifted them made it more difficult for them to try.

"Oh, not again! I think Mr. Pinky had reaso-" exclaimed Diddy as the water splashed in his face unprepared.

"Come on, we just have to get ther-" Dixie added as a wave swept over the boat and soaked them both.

The sea was getting wilder that they couldn't even speak well because the water passed over them and wet them continuously. Suddenly, a wave hit them hard along with the boat and, later, both were totally expelled and submerged in the water. The rushing tide sucked them out of their limbs, making it harder for them to swim in sync.

"DIXIE! OVER HERE!"

Diddy and Dixie held hands and screamed loudly and desperately, while ingesting big amounts of salt water while being mercilessly swept away by the sea. But the tension increased when a stronger wave pushed them in a direction where, a few meters away, was a rock of considerable size. The kongs tried to get as far away as they could to avoid crashing into the rock, but to no avail.

Suddenly, a stronger wave was approaching them and was heading towards the rock. Both were still trying to get out of that area, but a wave that had arrived before, submerged them completely. By that point, the two were already tired and fearing for their lives.

When suddenly, they felt a hand that didn't belong to either of them, taking them by the limbs with force, in turn that they could barely see underwater a silhouette holding them both. They came to the surface of the water, their eyes cloudy and the waves still passing over them. A minute later, they noticed that they were approaching the shores of the beach.

Being closer, the aggressive movement of the waves began to decrease drastically until it had finally calmed down. When Diddy and Dixie had regained their normal eyesight, they turned to look at who was carrying them loaded: it was none other than *Mr. Pinky*. On the one hand, they were too happy that he saved their lives, but on the other hand... they were already waiting for his reproaches which he was surely about to give them.

Finally, Mr. Pinky had reached dry land, along with Diddy and Dixie in his arms. He then placed them back in the sand. He waited for them to make a full recovery, then folded his arms and gave them the sternest look he had ever shown. Diddy and Dixie just looked at him for a few seconds without saying anything; they stood still as they smiled forcibly at him... Now the teacher would be very upset.

"H-hi... Mr. Pinky," Dixie stammered. "T-thanks for... *save us*."

"Yes, you are... an excellent swimmer!" Diddy continued with a forced smile. "Were you ever a champion in swimming?"

"You don't *understand!*" exclaimed the teacher, raising his voice sternly and immediately frightening them. "Did you go crazy?! I was very clear in telling you that *the sea at this season is DANGEROUS! It has been repeated to you a few times and yet you continue to ignore it!*"

Diddy and Dixie clung to each other while having a fearful look towards Mr. Pinky.

"Oh! Okay, Mr. Pinky... *We're sorry*, really," Diddy said in a tone of regret. "We just wanted to go home, we don't want to be here, you don't know how much we want to go back to DK Island."

"Well, if you really wanted to be on your island, to begin with: Mr. Diddy wouldn't *have gone out that night!*" the teacher pointed to Diddy.

"But you can't tell him that!" exclaimed Dixie in defense. "He was not to blame for those tamers capturing him!"

"But he could have avoided it! And besides, you, Miss Dixie, *wouldn't be here either!*"

"So what?! I'm already here and I can't do anything else!" Dixie replied. "Anyway, it's true! We really want to go back to DK Island!"

"But now you can't! And now that you are here, you have to stay until the hurricanes pass! If what just happened to you happened to you a few meters from here, *imagine what could happen to you offshore!*"

"Yes, we already noticed! Just excuse us, it won't happen again," Diddy replied, trying to defuse the tension.

"*I thought you would understand, but you turned out to be stubborn kids!*" Mr. Pinky shouted angrily.

"Hey! Don't yell at us! We're not babies!" exclaimed Diddy, pointing to him and imposing his stance.

"Not even your children!" added Dixie in the same tone. "Better calm down and talk to us well!"

"This discussion is over! Now go back to the house, please!" he ordered them firmly before holding the two of them by the hands as if they were a pair of punished students. "It's very dangerous for you to go sailing like that in this storm!"

Mr. Pinky, with a wrinkled face of anger, carried Diddy and Dixie by the hands at a fast pace, while they walked very reluctantly and tried to keep up with his steps...

Chapter 33: Uncertainty

Mr. Pinky was in his living room. He looked annoyed and at the same time worried about Diddy and Dixie; perhaps he hadn't measured their words and tone of voice in scolding them for their attempt to escape. Apparently, he just wanted to keep them safe since after all, they were kong children considered missing on DK Island.

Later, he came down again from his house and headed towards the room where the pair of little kongs was. He quietly opened the door and entered cautiously. Meanwhile, Diddy and Dixie were just sitting on the ground at the back of the room, their expressions low and cheerless. Both were clinging to each other and showing fear as Mr. Pinky was heading towards them.

"Uhh... Hey, children... I just wanted to talk to you," the professor told them in a much calmer tone. "Oh, no, don't be afraid of me, I won't yell at you this time."

Diddy and Dixie kept quiet the whole time; they just looked at Mr. Pinky with a face of anguish. Then, the teacher also sat on the ground.

"See, first of all I want you to excuse me for raising my voice to you," the teacher told them. "I know I've been strict with you since you were my students, but I still have a hard time taking action on what I say when someone makes me worry or lose patience. And I just want you to know that it's not because I was bad that I stopped you... I just tried to protect you. You have already been told: it's hurricane season and it's not good to sail on the seas; I just want you to understand *that*."

The two of them still didn't utter a single word about it, and continued to look at him in fear.

"Oh, I understand that you want to go back to your island and everything, but now you can't sail. It sounds distressing to you... but you can't, I'm sorry," the professor continued. "Do you know? I still remember the anguished faces of your relatives, especially Mr. Donkey's and Miss Dixie's family. And then when *you two* got lost, their despair increased; seeing your families like that was something that made me very sad. And when I found you here, I felt a great joy that would even take you back to your island if I could. You are declared missing there on DK Island, and now that I found you, knowing that I could protect you and something bad would happen to you, it would be one thing I would never forgive myself. And... no, don't listen to what I told you about you being stubborn kids; Mrs. Wrinkly had raved of you two when she summoned me; she said you're good kids, and... I can see that you are. And well... I also want to tell you not to worry about anything, I can let you stay here until everything passes, make yourself at home. I can even take or help you leave later to your island when the storms are over, if you want. In addition... on this island there are mail services, although in this hurricane storm it is not available, but... perhaps later you'll be able to send correspondence to your relatives to let them know about you. And no, don't be afraid of me, I know I'm very grumpy sometimes, but I didn't come to be your enemy either. Now... are you going to promise that you will no longer sail on the sea?"

"It's okay... Mr. Pinky," Diddy said in a muted tone.

"Yes, Mr. Pinky," Dixie added likewise. "Anyways... we're already well aware that we can't return now."

"Okay, kids," said the teacher, getting up and returning to the door as he looked at them more calmly. "Now I leave you, and rest well. And you already know... you can't sail for now. Be careful with that, please."

Having said all that, Mr. Pinky got out of the room and left. Meanwhile, Diddy and Dixie were still sitting on the ground with their eyes down. After so many attempts, they were beginning to resign themselves that they would have to spend a season on that island to be able to return with calm to DK Island. They were so frustrated that they were soon overcome with sadness and anguish.

"Diddy..." Dixie said weakly and with her eyes lowered. "What do we do now?"

"Nothing, Dixie... We can't do anything," Diddy replied in the same tone. "We can only wait."

"I don't want to stay on this island for three long months."

"And neither do I... Unless someone from DK Island comes looking for us, but... I doubt very much that they can get here or know that we are here."

"I wonder how Tiny, Chunky and Kiddy are at this moment," Dixie said sadly, on the verge of shedding tears. "I just hope they're okay... I don't want them to be thinking they lost me too," she added, wiping her eyes.

"I understand you... I miss Donkey so much... The last time we talked, we even had argued about those fools from school... Many times, I argued with him about it and I could never tell him the truth. I also don't want Donkey to think something terrible happened to me."

Suddenly, Diddy also began to shed tears from his eyes. Dixie leaned on Diddy's shoulder as they both began to emit small sobs and shed their tears silently at the same time, wiping them continuously.

"This is all my fault, Dixie," Diddy said, still wiping away tears. "For... having gone out to sea that night."

"No, it's not... In fact, it's mine," Dixie replied in kind. "I mean... I shouldn't have listened to that orangutan."

"And so what? He threatened you along with those other fools and you had no choice but to give them my pyramid and follow their orders... On the other hand, no one ordered me to go out that night; I shouldn't have vented like that."

"No, Diddy... it really isn't," Dixie said, wiping away another tear. "And we can't change anything anymore."

The two were silent for a few minutes. They were just looking at the floor, thinking how everything had changed since a week ago, when they were still on DK Island and had the opportunity to have done things right so that at least they didn't end up far from their island.

"Do you know what this reminds me of Mr. Pinky?" Dixie said after a while. "That time when we had just met you, and we wanted to return to our island where I lived, but then you arrived and told us not to leave because we didn't know the way and we could get lost."

"Wow, so... that's how Mr. Pinky must have felt," Diddy mused, still staring down. "In fact... that time I thought the same thing he told us: I had saved you from those evil apes, you were fugitives, and if I, having the opportunity to continue helping you and something bad happened to you, I'd never forgive myself for that. But... I also understand now how you felt: you needed to return to your island... just as we now want to return to DK Island."

"That's right. But... it wasn't bad in the end," Dixie said, starting to smile a little again. "If we had left that time, I don't know what would become of us now; maybe we would still be going from island to island looking to survive or we would have had a terrible fate. But luckily it was not like that; DK Island has been... as a second chance of life for us. In fact, we feel it as if we have been living there for much longer. And about you... we still consider you our hero," she added, smiling again.

Suddenly, Diddy changed his face and smiled at Dixie's words as well. Seconds later, he placed his hand on hers, and Dixie leaned her head on his shoulder. Then, Diddy hugged her albeit with a little shyness and, in the middle of the moment, Dixie gave him a kiss on the cheek, making him blush immediately and feel some nerves near her, although more confident this time.

"Well... will we go to sleep or what?" Dixie asked minutes later, parted from the embrace.

"I don't know, I'm not sleepy yet," Diddy said with a shrug.

"Me either. It's not even midnight."

"And then what?"

"What if we go outside for a walk?" Dixie suggested.

"But Mr. Pinky is going to see us."

"But this time we won't go to the beach, much less to the sea. We're just going to walk a little bit."

"Well, you're right," Diddy added, shrugging and smiling again. "And if he finds us, he won't tell us anything. So... let's go right now?"

Diddy and Dixie stood up and climbed back up the high window where they had recently escaped. They went outside the house and, likewise, came down from the tree trying not to make any noise so as not to wake Mr. Pinky. They crawled through some bushes, then walked under the trees outside before running again, but this time, aimlessly.

Moments later, they began to walk through various places on the island, in turn trying not to lose sight of the way to the house of Mr. Pinky. A short walk around the island wouldn't be bad after a huge frustration.

"Look, what's that over there?" Dixie pointed toward a cliff that emitted a dim light.

"It looks very bright, let's see."

The pair of kongs headed towards where they had pointed. When they arrived, they saw that it was a cliff not so high, where under it, there was a huge lake that had a particular turquoise color. The place was so nice that the two were amazed and stayed to contemplate it for a couple of minutes.

"Look, we can go down there," Diddy pointed to a descent toward the lake.

Both immediately went to the indicated point and descended carefully until they arrived and could see the lake more closely. Although by the time they arrived, they had noticed that the lake now had a violet color.

"What happened to the lake?" Dixie asked in confusion.

"Wait... Now it's turning green?"

"Wait a minute, I think this is the lake that changes color, the one that the circus animals had mentioned."

"Really?"

They moved a little closer to the shores of the lake and now it was turning a shade of green. Seconds later, it was turning a light blue color.

"Wow, this lake is awesome!" Dixie exclaimed, bending down to touch the water with one finger.

"Wait! Don't touch it," Diddy interrupted immediately. "Hadn't they said that this water had toxic substances?"

"Well, it doesn't look like that," Dixie said, laughing a little before splashing water on Diddy's face.

"Hey!" Diddy exclaimed before also grabbing some of the water and splashing Dixie, but she started running away.

Suddenly, they both started running around and trying to reach each other while laughing. But later, they got a little tired and continued walking.

"You know? If this lake has toxicity," Dixie said, "it would be perfect to give someone you hate a good dip."

"Can you imagine throwing those fools from school there?" Diddy added with a malicious look.

"Hey, that would be crazy," Dixie added with the same expression.

The two continued to walk and, between times, played on the shores of the lake. There was also a spacious grassy ground beside more than several trees in the background; the place was very nice as one of those to go for a walk at night after a long day.

After several minutes of walking and running, Diddy and Dixie stopped to sit near the shores of the lake. They wanted to feel a little better after their attempts to return to DK Island didn't work; after all, at least they were alive and in no danger so far. But they still wished things had been different.

"We're going to miss the vacation trip," Dixie said disappointedly, crossing her arms. "There's not even someone who builds aircraft like Funky to fly us away."

"I know, I'm sure even Cranky and Wrinkly will return to DK Island before us," Diddy added. "And only left that they know that we got lost."

"How do you think they will react?"

"Well, Wrinkly is obviously going to get really bad," Diddy replied earnestly... before switching to a joking tone. "But I'm sure Cranky will only say 'in my day no brat got lost like that'."

Dixie began to laugh a little at Diddy's imitation, to which he joined later to laughter. But later, they became serious again when remembering their current situation and were left thinking about various things.

"Geez, I didn't think this would end like this," Dixie said with a low look, before sighing.

"I didn't even imagine that we would end up on an island that I haven't heard of in my life... And besides, with climatic phenomena that won't even let us return now."

Both continued another moment of silence while thinking and remained serious after the disappointment they had just had. Later, Dixie only leaned her head on Diddy, to which he also settled by her side.

"The good thing about all this is that at least... you're here with me, too, Dixie," Diddy said before reacting and being nervous about what he said. "Uh, I mean... good thing you're here too, Dixie, I'm glad to spend time with you... No, no, I mean--"

"I know, Diddy," Dixie replied, laughing and trying to figure out what he meant. "I also like to spend time with you, I always enjoy your company, even... you make me feel a little better in the midst of this whole situation."

"Uhh, yeah... Yes, that's what I meant," Diddy said, scratching his head as his face turned almost to the same shade as his cap.

"Oh, you look adorable when... you blush," Dixie told him before laughing playfully.

"W-what? No, I'm not," Diddy exclaimed, crossing his arms and trying to act normal.

"Of course you are; I've seen that face before," Dixie added, tickling him and with a playful tone.

"Hey, Dixie!" Diddy exclaimed amid the laughter, and then tried to tickle back.

In the midst of tinkering with each other, Diddy had bumped his face into Dixie's, causing them to stop instantly and blush while laughing somewhat shyly. Suddenly, feeling a little more confident, Diddy decided to play along with Dixie and looked at her playfully after seeing that she had also blushed intensely.

"Now who is the one that blushes?" Diddy said in a mocking tone.

Dixie gestured angrily and gave him a little push when she was defeated, while Diddy laughed quietly. Seconds later, Dixie looked at him again and also began to laugh.

"Hey, Dix..." Diddy said after a while.

"Yeah?"

"It's that... I wanted to tell you something," Diddy pronounced, looking sideways, but at the same time trying to look confident.

"About what?" Dixie asked, looking at him.

"It-it's about what I told you this afternoon," Diddy took a little breath so he wasn't so nervous. "I really... like you very much, Dix. Y-you are very special to me, and I feel... too many things for you," he said, smiling somewhat shyly.

Dixie instantly blushed again after hearing those words from Diddy again, and then smiled at him too, unable to help herself.

"Oh, Diddy," she said, emitting a few small laughs as she continued to blush. "You also sound adorable when you say it."

"Hey, are we going to continue with the same game?" Diddy said in the same way, before speaking to her more calmly again. "But yes... I wanted to tell you that."

Suddenly, Diddy took a hand from Dixie as she settled in front of him, and smiled tenderly at her. She felt her heart pounding, while Diddy couldn't describe what he felt as he saw her and had her in front of him.

"Dix... when I met you with Kiddy, Tiny and Chunky, I never imagined everything you would make me feel later... At first, I thought 'oh, no, I can't feel these things', but... it happened. I always tried to tell you on several occasions but I couldn't. But now that I did, and that apart you also knew it, of course... I want to tell you that I really like you and I feel so much for you. You have also made that these days haven't been so bad, because almost every time I'm with you... I feel so good. I really... love you, Dixie, and I wanted to ask you if you'd like... you and me to be-" Diddy stopped immediately when he realized what he was going to say, and even nerves attacked him. "Uhh, W-well-"

"A c-couple?" Dixie continued trying to help him finish the question, but then she was a little embarrassed too and feared she sounded too direct. "Uhh, I meant-"

"Y-yes, yes... that," Diddy continued, smiling nervously before pausing again. "Uhh... I don't know if now is a good time while we're on this island to say it, and-"

"No, don't worry about that, Diddy," Dixie interrupted with a few small laughs and taking courage to tell him what she felt too. "I... I always expected to hear that from you. Don't think that it's not a good time, I mean, just look: a week ago we were on DK Island, then in a zoo and now on this island without being able to return... Tomorrow, who knows. I have waited a lot for you, as you cannot imagine, and the truth... I wouldn't want to let this moment pass. So... what would you say if I told you that... *Yes, I'd like to?*"

Diddy froze for a while as he smiled little by little and had a feeling that went from his stomach to his heart and then it began to beat so fast.

Suddenly, Dixie approached Diddy and hugged him with all the affection she had in store for him as she had never done before, and, within a few seconds, Diddy reciprocated the hug feeling an enormous joy that made him completely forget all the heavy week they had had.

When they parted, they stared into each other's eyes while holding hands subtly. Gazing at Dixie's emerald green eyes was something that left Diddy mesmerized. Dixie gave him a kiss on the cheek shyly, so Diddy blushed heavily. Then, being close to his face, Dixie gave him a little kiss on the lips... It was something small but it made Diddy feel much more excited at that moment.

"Oh, Dixie..." Diddy said, smiling tenderly and stroking her hair. "I waited so long for this moment."

"Me too... Diddy."

Diddy got closer to Dixie, while she did the same. Both were settling down and closing their eyes and, suddenly, their lips joined again in another warm kiss. The two felt their hearts racing faster than ever as they felt their lips together with each other. They forgot for a while about the setbacks they had had in those last days and just enjoyed the moment. When they parted, they stared at each other for a while longer and smiled with tenderness and emotion... An emotion they didn't know how to describe how good it felt.

Then, they held each other for a long time while enjoying being so close together. Afterwards, they kept sitting in front of the shores of the lake. They talked again about DK Island, wondering what they would do now that they had to stay on that island for a long time while they watched that lake of changing colors. Despite the recent bad moment, being in each other's company and sharing some quality time, made them return the spirits... as if by magic. And so, they passed for several minutes, before they later returned to the tree of Mr. Pinky's house; while it was something they didn't plan either, they didn't feel so bad having a more comfortable sleeping space.

Chapter 34: Resignation

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The next day, Diddy and Dixie each woke up at their hammocks. At first, they didn't know where they were, although soon they remembered that they were in that room they had been assigned to sleep. Unlike previous days, this time they felt that they had rested better and more comfortably.

Both, from their respective hammocks greeted each other and smiled at a distance, before commenting on how they had rested. After getting up, they went to get ready to start the day.

Mr. Pinky, on the other hand, was walking from the kitchen of his house to one of the terraces, carrying a table and a few chairs. Even those areas of his house were elegantly themed as in any corner of the entire residence in the tree.

Suddenly, the pair of little kongs had also arrived on the scene, since he had called them earlier so they could eat.

"Hi, Mr. Pinky!" said the two at the same time.

"Oh, how are you, Mr. Diddy and Miss Dixie? Did you sleep well this first night?"

"Of course," replied Diddy. "Do we help you with anything?"

"Just bring your own plate," said the professor. "It's almost all set."

"Okay, mister," Dixie replied smiling, before going with Diddy to take their respective dishes.

"Uhh... kids," the teacher later called them. "And I also want to apologize again for... last night's arguing and-"

"Ah, don't worry anymore, Mr. Pinky," Dixie interrupted calmly. "At least you saved our lives."

"That's true," Diddy added.

Diddy and Dixie each brought their dishes to the table, and then Mr. Pinky joined them. The two looked somewhat happy and relaxed compared to the previous day, which Mr. Pinky could notice and even looked at them with some strangeness. It even seemed as if they hadn't had that disagreement with the teacher.

"Hey, kids, I wanted to ask you a question," said the professor, looking at them with some suspicion as they began to eat. "Where did you go last night? I didn't see you after I talked to you."

Diddy and Dixie stood still at the question, looked at each other, and then looked at Mr. Pinky, trying to hide their expression.

"Uhh, we just went for a walk," Diddy replied, trying not to laugh.

"You went for a walk, huh?" Mr. Pinky said, gazing up and crossing his arms. "You went to that lake that changes color, right?"

The two of them froze and opened their eyes to the fullest, internally begging that the teacher hadn't been watching them the entire time they were there.

"And how do you know we went there?" Dixie asked, smiling with some nerves.

"I wanted to make sure you didn't try to sail again and I went to follow you two. But I only saw you running and playing near that lake, so I assumed there was nothing to worry about and I went back to sleep. I just hope you didn't swim in that lake; that water is harmful.

"Ah, yeah, yeah, that happened," Diddy said with a forced smile. "And... don't worry, mister, we didn't go into the water."

Diddy and Dixie felt a relief, looked at each other, and then shrugged, both trying not to laugh as they remembered their moments from the night before.

"Hey, Mr. Pinky," Dixie said after a while. "And what could we do during these three months?"

"Well, you can go for a walk in places near here, there are many interesting places. You can also go visit your circus friends if you want. I'm not going to stop you if that's what you think, although yes: if you are going out, just don't forget to tell me where you will be in case an emergency arises, and also be careful with strange animals and places far from this area."

"Sounds easy," Diddy replied as he continued eating.

"Oh, and don't forget to clean and tidy your room every week," added the teacher, "just as you can help me water the plants for food."

"Okay, mister," Dixie replied.

"And by the way, guys... Do you remember that last night I mentioned some mail services that are here?" asked the teacher, to which they both nodded. "See, maybe from the last weeks of the hurricane season they'll be available, in case you want to send messages to your relatives on DK Island."

"Really?" Dixie exclaimed intently along with Diddy. "But now it can't be done?"

"No, the hurricanes just started; at this time, they don't send messages anywhere. But as the phenomenon progresses, it'll be enabled... And you know that DK Island is too far away."

"Oh," Diddy said with some disappointment. "Mr. Pinky, and how long have you lived here?" he asked her after a while."

"In this house, for barely a year," Mr. Pinky replied. "Every so often I have been changing residence... In fact, I may leave this house in a few months."

"Wow, you have a lot of houses," Dixie exclaimed in amazement. "That sounds great."

"Oh, no, I always have only one house at a time," the teacher clarified with small laughs, before getting serious again. "And no, it's not... as cool as it could be thought."

"Really?" Diddy asked with a look of strangeness. "How can that not be great?"

"No, it's not," Mr. Pinky reaffirmed. "It's... Well, it's for work matters, you wouldn't understand."

Diddy and Dixie looked at him with some strangeness, but then shrugged. Later, the three of them finished eating, and then left everything tidy.

After that moment, Diddy and Dixie went back down to the level where their room was. The two still wanted to try to return to DK Island, but they were trying to resign themselves to the fact that they could no longer do anything for the time being and that they would assume to stay on that island for three months... even though they would still be just as concerned about the kongs of DK Island. Still, despite the odds, Diddy and Dixie maintained a smile that had lasted since the night before; after all the heavy situation, something good would have to come out, and that is that now the two had made the agreement to become what could be considered a *couple*. Finally... at least one of their biggest wishes had come true for both of them.

"Hey, Dixie," Diddy said somewhat shyly. "Uhh... don't you want to... go somewhere now?"

"Why not? Where are we going?" Dixie asked with a little laugh.

"How about going to the beach? Obviously, we won't be so out to sea, of course."

"Okay. Let's go," Dixie replied before giving him a kiss on the cheek that made him blush instantly.

The pair of kongs went to inform Mr. Pinky that they would go out and said goodbye to him. Then, they climbed down the tree and ran their way to the beach, competing for who came first, as they used to do when they were on DK Island.

They went to the beach, the same one where they had been when they arrived on that island. The day, although it was somewhat cloudy and cold, felt too calm to enjoy a moment in company; even the sea water was calm on the shores. The two thought again about the idea of trying to search for DK Island at that very moment, but at the same time... they didn't want to get into more trouble or put their lives at risk like they had the night before, in addition to remembering how terrible the storm that had brought them to that island had been.

The two, after so much running, sat on the sand to rest.

"Consider this as... our *first* date," Diddy said, smiling and trying to stay sure.

"Oh, okay," Dixie replied, smiling back and somewhat blushing. "But what is supposed to be done on a first date?"

"Uhh... I don't know either," Diddy said, shrugging and adopting a confused expression. "Well, I've heard that they just know each other and that's it."

"It sounds very simple, but... we were not friends before?" Dixie questioned with a few small laughs.

"You're right," he replied in kind. "So, what would you like to do?"

"Well... what if you hug me for a while or something?" Dixie replied, holding his hand. Diddy was somewhat shy about affectionate gestures, which Dixie noticed and gave small laughs, as he seemed not to be used to such demonstrative gestures. "Hey, don't be nervous, just do it."

Diddy, still trying to control his nerves of happiness so that he could now express himself affectionately towards Dixie, smiled and tried to show himself more confidently. Then, he hugged

her tenderly and then gave her a kiss on the cheek. Dixie was smiling as she blushed and, seconds later, also kissed him back on the cheek.

"Hey! But *what* do we have here?!"

Diddy and Dixie were startled to hear a deep voice that came from neither of them. They turned to look and it was none other than Mr. Pinky, who was staring at them.

"Uhh, M-Mr. Pinky... It's not what you think," Diddy stammered, not knowing how to react to his unexpected presence.

"I must have suspected it, are you two... *in love*?" the professor asked them, crossing his arms.

"N-no, mister, nothing to see," Dixie replied with a forced smile. "We were just... Ah, giving us a friendly hug."

"Hmm, and with *little kisses* included?" the professor added, with his eyebrows raised. "Wow, a pair of friends like that you don't see every day."

"Uhh... No, I was just watching... if Dixie had something in her eye, that's all," Diddy added with another forced smile. "It's not what you think."

"And why were you following us?" Dixie asked, looking at him seriously.

"I just wanted to make sure one last time you weren't out to sea again," the teacher said, smiling calmly. "Well, I don't interrupt you anymore, keep up with your... *friendly hugs*."

Without saying more, Mr. Pinky withdrew and left Diddy and Dixie alone again. Both made sure the professor was no longer in sight a few seconds later.

"Has he already left?" Diddy asked, watching in the distance.

"Apparently yes," Dixie replied. "Can you imagine what it would be like if we told him?"

"Don't even tell me, maybe he'd be like Cranky or come out with a speech," Diddy joked, which made Dixie laugh a little. "By the way, Dix, don't think I meant to hide it and-"

"Ah, don't worry, Diddy," Dixie said, smiling. "Anyways, this is just between the two of us, we won't be bragging about it so soon, right?"

"That's right. We must keep a low profile, especially about Mr. Pinky because of how overbearing he usually is."

Then, the two settled back into the sand while looking at the horizon together.

"Hey, Diddy," Dixie said before pausing. "Do you think we will survive three months here on this island?"

"We'll try... I hope it won't be that difficult. The good thing is that there is enough food on this island and Mr. Pinky let us stay in the tree of his house with greater comfort. At least we'll be fine," Diddy replied before sighing earnestly. "And of course... let's just hope everyone is well there on DK Island."

"And at least we won't see those fools from school... and they won't know about Jemky's matter either."

"It's true, they may even be searching for us, and they'll never find us here," Diddy added, feeling somewhat relieved. "Hey, I hadn't thought of it that way."

"Well, so, I hope we're okay and no one bothers us," Dixie replied in kind, before smiling. "And we can also spend time together."

"Oh, yes... Of course, Dixie," Diddy said, blushing at that. "Wow, are we... *dating* now?" he added with a few small laughs and was not yet so accustomed to the new terms. "I mean... I've never had a girlfriend, and I don't know that much about what it's like to be a boyfriend."

"Hey, I haven't had a boyfriend either," Dixie replied in kind. "This is also new to me."

"I guess now we just have to... love each other?" added Diddy, laughing a little shyly. "Well, what were we up to?"

"Ah, yes, I had told you to hug me, but... what if now we kiss?"

"Well... if you want, Dix," Diddy replied, blushing much more, but at the same time, trying to feel confident.

Diddy settled in front of her and took her hands, although then he was shy again, to which Dixie laughed a little and decided to go ahead to kiss him first, being reciprocated later by him. Both shared another tender kiss; every time that happened, they had a feeling that made their hearts beat at an accelerated rate, but at the same time... it made them feel so good, as if they wanted that moment to last forever... As soon as they parted, they couldn't stop smiling at each other and feeling so excited to be together.

"So, how about now we play on the beach?" Diddy asked after a while, to which Dixie nodded in the affirmative.

Later, both continued with their "first date", although neither of them considered it so much like that. As they did on DK Island, they started playing in the sand and then in the sea, obviously not far from the shore due to the danger that was there. This time, they were feeling calmer about being on that island; between moments, they got the feeling that they were on the same DK Island and that later they would return to their respective homes.

The following days had been very quiet after so much hustle and bustle. Everything was going normally while Diddy and Dixie fulfilled the period of time they would have to be on Hurricane Island until the heavy weather passed. At first it was somewhat complicated, since they had to adapt to the lifestyle they had to lead for the moment, and each one had to take responsibility for themselves. The hardest thing for the two of them was that they missed DK Island too much, and much more so the kongs there. But at the same time, they tried to get the idea that all their family and friends would be fine, and they couldn't wait to see their faces again when they met again.

Mr. Pinky also used to cheer them both up when they got sad about DK Island, so Diddy and Dixie began to get along better with him and even began to lose their fear about him. He had behaved

very well with them, and they had no further disagreement. From time to time, the teacher would spend time with them and teach them various things as if they were still his students or sometimes tell them stories. The image of an arrogant teacher they had about Mr. Pinky was slowly disappearing, and he no longer seemed to be as overbearing as they once thought.

Sometimes, the two little kongs also visited the circus animals in that shelter, since they had established good friendships with them. These animals were gradually healing their wounds received in the circus, and began to see themselves with a better countenance, which also made Diddy and Dixie happy.

In the same way, Diddy and Dixie had enough time to spend together. Although ending up on a distant island was not something they expected, they had finally managed to confess to each other what they had long felt for each other; it was something that excited them too much and, therefore, lifted their spirits a little in the middle of that situation. After several things, they had gone from being best friends to becoming a couple; it was such a wonderful thing that the two of them sometimes couldn't believe it was true.

Diddy and Dixie already felt more confident about walking around the places on the island, so they often went to explore together as they used to on DK Island. In fact, Hurricane Island had several nice and interesting places to visit that they hadn't seen before on DK Island. On several occasions, and hidden from Mr. Pinky, they planned their romantic dates in those places of the island... Although actually, they were always normal dates as they had done before, only this time, between their games, laughter and jokes of always, now they also included signs of affection such as kisses, hugs and loving gestures, something that increasingly reinforced their affection for each other. Diddy and Dixie weren't having such a bad time after all.

Diddy felt that one of his wishes had finally come true. Being reciprocated by Dixie, made him feel great. When before he could only look at her, play and hang out with her, now he could also hug her, kiss her and tell her everything he felt for her, even though sometimes shyness or his difficulty of loving demonstration invaded him. He regretted not telling her his feelings when they were still on DK Island; they would have saved a lot of events, but at the same time, he tried to assimilate how everything had been, and at least he had managed to take the first step with Dixie.

On the other hand, Dixie also felt so excited for Diddy. She was no longer thinking about how to let him know about her feelings; now they were together and she could fearlessly express all her affection to him. Even though he wasn't as expressive or loving as Donkey and Candy were, that didn't matter much to Dixie anymore, and she even started trying to accept him as he was; as long as she spent wonderful moments by his side, she was quite happy.

Both had always thought that if they became something more, their dates would perhaps be more sophisticated and even better planned, but just a walk along the shores of the sea, swimming in the lakes, playing in the rain, going out at night to look at the sky or just look at each other and pass hugging anywhere without doing anything, made them feel their best and excited them.

Each day, Diddy and Dixie felt their loving affection for each other grow and grow stronger. During those days, they enjoyed their new love bond that they now had. They felt as if the universe had been in their favor for bringing them together. The special moments they spent together made time pass slowly and, at the same time, calmed them for a while the frustration of not being able to return to DK Island during that weather season.

Chapter End Notes

The next chapters will be calm :)... And enjoy as long as it is.

Chapter 35: A New Love Bond

It had been four weeks since Diddy and Dixie had become a couple, and they had been doing pretty well so far. In fact, those days had been so quiet that between moments made them think that it wouldn't be so difficult to stay on that distant island for so long.

It was late afternoon, while the two little kongs were playing and swinging through the trees after another dating day on Hurricane Island.

"You're not going to catch me, Dixie!" Diddy exclaimed defiantly as he ran through the tree branches in front of Dixie.

"You just wait!" Dixie replied in kind.

Dixie, while trying to reach Diddy, climbed to the highest branches and then jumped to where he was, landing with the help of her hair.

"What have you said?!" she said, catching him by surprise and giving him a fright.

"Oh, you always come out with your tricks," replied Diddy in defeat as Dixie laughed.

Later, they both sat on the same branch of the tree, still playing and laughing together. Then, in the middle of their games, the two stayed hugging and staring into nothingness.

"Hey, Dix... do you remember a long time ago when I asked you out the first time and then Kiddy, Chunky and Tiny also came to my house?"

"How can we forget that? I actually wanted to go out along with you but they got involved. And that they themselves suggested that I invite you."

"Really? Donkey had told me the same thing. And when we got to my house, Donkey said he would distract them so I would invite you again."

"What a coincidence, we had also planned the same thing to distract Donkey."

Both laughed for a while when they remembered that day where it had practically been their first date, even though they were only friends at that time. Then, they settled into another affectionate embrace, and Dixie gave Diddy a sweet kiss on the cheek.

"Dixie..." Diddy said, gently taking her hair. "You don't know how amazing you've made me feel despite all this."

"And you always make me feel good, Diddy," Dixie replied before hugging him tighter, to which he reciprocated with the same happiness. Then, both separated a little, but without ceasing to look at each other directly. "You can't imagine how happy I am for ours, it's... so beautiful everything."

"So do I, Dix," he said with the same emotion. "You don't know how long I waited to be like this with you, and now... we are."

"Ohh, you're so cute," Dixie exclaimed, playfully holding his face.

Then, both embraced again with all the excitement they felt being close to each other, and then continued to look together at the environment they had in sight.

"By the way, it's being done later," Diddy said later, looking up at the sky. "I think we should leave now."

"You're right," Dixie added. "Let's go before Mr. Pinky starts to worry."

The two came down from the tree and headed back to Mr. Pinky's house. For all those days they used to go back a little late, and even a few times they had worried the teacher.

When they arrived, the two went upstairs and went to the living room to greet the professor. But to their surprise, he was already standing by the door and with a somewhat serious look.

"Hi, Mr. Pinky!" said the two at the same time.

"Why do you always take this time to arrive?" the teacher asked them with a suspicious look.

"We never knew the time, sir," Diddy said with a forced smile.

"Well, if you say so," the teacher replied, gazing eyebrows up and smiling calmly. "Or are you two really... *a little couple?*"

Diddy and Dixie opened their eyes wide and tried to hide it, but they couldn't help but smile, although they also weren't so sure about telling Mr. Pinky that, and they only made signs to each other as to whether they would say it or not.

"Don't worry, I won't say anything bad to you," said the teacher, laughing serenely. "But it's that for a few weeks I have seen you hanging around so together, more than normal."

"Actually... yes, mister," Diddy replied shyly, while Dixie gave a little laugh in the same way.

"Well, I must have imagined it," said the teacher, smiling at them in a relaxed tone. "Anyway, you two seem to be good guys. Although... be very careful; those things about love are something that must be carried *with responsibility*, it's something very complex."

"What are you saying?" Diddy asked, smiling with a strange look. "Why do you say that?"

"I don't see it as complex," Dixie added in the same way. "I mean... we just love each other and that's it, what's so difficult about that?"

"Oh, it's that you two are still kids," the teacher replied with a shrug. "But hey, it's your business, of course," he added, smiling again. "And so, how did it go?... At least everything is okay between the two of you?"

"Of course," Dixie said in the same way. "We have done very well, it hasn't been... *complex* at all as you say."

"Well, I hope you continue like that then," said the teacher, smiling at them, to which Diddy and Dixie continued to emit small laughs after having said it. "You seem to be good guys, after all... Even though you know? At first, I thought Miss Dixie was dating Mr. Jemky when he gave her those exuberant gifts," he added, looking serious.

"Oh, no, that wasn't true," Dixie replied with a disgusted face. "How could I date a bad boy?"

"Yeah, you are right, Miss Dixie. Good thing you never paid attention to him," the teacher said before shaking his head from side to side. "Those children could only become thugs when they grow up. Their behaviors are quite disturbing from what you tell me, and they are just kids like you."

"In fact, they were already being thugs," Diddy said. "They really are crazy."

"Geez, I wonder what about them," the teacher added earnestly. "Was Mr. Rocky the boy claimed to have been found injured on DK Island? They said he had light fur on his head."

"Uhh, well... we may not know that," Dixie said with some discomfort of remembering it.

"And what kind of parents would these kids have, by the way?" Mr. Pinky added pensively. "Or in what environment would they have grown up to behave like this and be in bad steps? I wouldn't have allowed those things to my children."

"Do you have children, Mr. Pinky?" Diddy asked curiously.

"Uhh... Yes... I *had* them..."

Suddenly, Mr. Pinky made a gesture of seriousness, even more than before. Then, he looked down and then turned to enter his house and sit on the sofa. Diddy and Dixie noticed the teacher's strange reaction, and Diddy thought that maybe it was an inappropriate question that the teacher might not have wanted to hear.

Diddy and Dixie also entered the house and went to Mr. Pinky. He was pensive and without any expression on his face.

"Uhh, Mr. Pinky... Just in case, was I somewhat-"

"No, no, excuse me. I can answer you," said the teacher, coming to his senses. "As I was saying... I did have children."

"Really?" Dixie exclaimed, in amazement along with Diddy.

"That's right," replied the teacher, showing himself quite seriously and looking into nothingness. "I had two children and a pretty wife. But they are... Uhh, well... They went on an eternal journey through the stars."

"Oh, no... We're so sorry, mister," Diddy said, pitied along with Dixie.

"We didn't know that," Dixie added in the same tone.

"I still remember them," Mr. Pinky said as if he was trying to restrain himself, in fact, he had an expression never seen before in him. "I had a wife I loved so much... and two sweet children; if they were still alive, they would surely be even older than you. At that time, they were just... *babies*."

"Did you say babies?" Dixie asked with a little uncertainty. "And... can we ask what happened?"

"Well... Some wild and heinous beasts did something terrible to them!" replied the teacher showing some indignation, which scared Diddy and Dixie a little. But then, he just sighed. "Oh, well... it's actually a very hard story that wouldn't be suitable for you kids, I mean it... Better let's go now to prepare dinner."

With that said, the teacher just got up and as if he didn't want to talk anymore. Diddy and Dixie remained silent and with a few looks of confusion after listening to the teacher, and then followed him into the kitchen still confused.

Then, the three began to prepare dinner, since Mr. Pinky told them from time to time to help him with some of the household chores. Although truth be told, Diddy and Dixie had a good time anyway.

Later, the three of them had already had dinner. Mr. Pinky stayed at home, while Diddy and Dixie went down to their room. But before entering, the two decided better to stay for a while on the outside porch of their room. They sat outside the room while looking at the night sky; almost every day they used to spend some time together like that.

"Can you imagine what Mr. Pinky's children would be like?" Diddy commented.

"I'm sure he'd have them studying all day," Dixie added with a slight smile, before taking on a total seriousness. "Hey, but seriously... what could have happened to them?"

"Do you think some beasts have really hurt them? That sounded kind of strange."

"Maybe it's really a terrible story that he can't tell and he said it that way to scare us."

"It's true, the teacher was too serious when he said it," Diddy added before pausing as he looked out into nothingness. "You know? He's not so arrogant anymore after all."

"Yeah, he's better now than when he was our teacher at school," Dixie said. "Now he has become much friendlier."

The two then remained silent, before getting back together, whereupon Dixie leaned her head next to Diddy and hugged him.

"By the way, Dix... I wanted to ask you something," Diddy said, looking pensive after a while. "What do you think Chunky, Kiddy and Tiny would say about... you know, this between you and me?"

"Oh, I'm sure they'll get very excited," Dixie replied, smiling and shrugging after separating. "I already want to see how they'll react when they know."

"Really? Won't it seem... weird to them or something?" Diddy questioned with a shy smile.

"And why? They did want to see me with you; you're a good monkey and you've been a good friend of ours," Dixie added with a few light laughs, before calming down. "In addition, I'm sure that... my parents or my aunt and uncle would have liked you very well."

"Really?"

"Of course," Dixie added before hugging him. "You're amazing, Diddy."

"Oh, Dixie," he replied, blushing a little. "Oh, I'm really happy for us," he added with some excitement.

Diddy gave Dixie a kiss on the face and hugged her tenderly, to which she blushed a lot and stroked his cheek while looking into his eyes.

"Hey, Dixie," Diddy said after a while. "Do you want to go to that huge lake again tomorrow?"

"The one on a huge cliff with vines? Yes, of course, let's go!" Dixie replied with excitement.

"Okay, Dix... And this time we'll jump into the lake from those vines, what do you think?"

"Weren't you afraid to throw yourself?" she asked in a mocking tone.

"Hey, that's not true anymore," he replied, crossing his arms before Dixie started tickling him.

Then, both began to play, until later, they settled next to each other while continuing to look towards the natural environment in sight.

Chapter 36: Rescue

The next day, it was past noon when Diddy and Dixie wondered what they could do next. This time, they had considered going swimming in one of the island's lakes, and so they decided. For the past few weeks, they had been spending their dates in those areas.

"See you, Mr. Pinky!" Diddy and Dixie said as they came down from the house.

"See you later, children," the teacher replied cheerfully as he watered his plants. "Remember not to accept candies from strangers and not to go to places far away."

Diddy and Dixie said goodbye to the teacher, and began to head towards the site.

"Let's see who gets there first," Diddy said to Dixie with a defiant look, before running off.

"Not if I arrive before!" Dixie exclaimed, trying to reach him.

The two kongs began to compete for who came faster. It was one of their favorite games that they used to play frequently for a long time.

They spent several minutes running, pushing each other between the trees and swinging across the vines. It reminded them a lot of DK Island and they wanted to feel like they were there.

"You can't beat me!" Diddy said to Dixie in a mocking tone as he took the lead.

"That's what you think!" replied Dixie in the same tone and speeding up more... Until at one point, she stopped suddenly. "*Wait, wait, wait!*"

"Huh? What's wrong?" Diddy asked, stopping too.

Suddenly, as they continued with their competitive game, they began to hear strange sounds that stopped them both completely.

"What is that noise?" Diddy asked, looking around.

"They sound like some... *screams*?" Dixie speculated, trying to identify those sounds until she could find where they came from. "I think they come from there."

Both began to follow those noises that were heard louder and louder. They were not going to give it so much importance at first, but the closer they got, the more heartbreaking the screams were heard... as if they came from someone in danger.

"*HELP!*" it began to be heard clearly.

"It looks like someone is in trouble! Let's go!" Diddy exclaimed, pointing to where those screams could be heard.

Diddy and Dixie continued to look for where the cries for help came from, which apparently was not from one, but from some beings who desperately asked for help. In fact, those voices seemed to sound somewhat high-pitched as if they came from little beings.

"Diddy, look!" Dixie pointed in a not-so-distant direction.

Suddenly, they realized where the screams were coming from: in the middle of some trees, there was a hanging net that was tied to ropes in the branches of the trees that ended in stakes stuck in the ground. Within that network, there were what appeared to be *kong* children... They screamed in desperation and struggled with their limbs to get out of there. Diddy and Dixie immediately headed towards the point where they were.

"Look, some monkeys! *This way!*" one of the children inside the net suddenly exclaimed, noticing Diddy and Dixie. "*Help us, please!*"

"Don't worry, we'll help you!" Dixie exclaimed, trying to calm them down.

"How do we get them all out?!" Diddy asked.

"Untie that rope from there!" one of the children motioned, pointing to the stakes in the ground. "The one on the right!"

Diddy and Dixie hurriedly untied the rope that the children had pointed out to them. It hadn't been so difficult, since within a few seconds, they managed to untie it.

"*NO, NO, IT WAS THE LEFT - AAAAHHHH!*"

Suddenly, the net instantly loosened and fell to the ground along with the children inside. Diddy and Dixie were alarmed that they had done the wrong maneuver and immediately headed towards the net to check on the children. As soon as they arrived, they rummaged through the net to get them out of there.

"Oh, no! Sorry, are you okay?!" Dixie said worriedly as she held each other's hands to help them out.

"Don't worry... We're fine," one of the children replied agitatedly, after they had got out completely.

Some four ape children came out of that net: they were two boys and two girls, all chimpanzees and, apparently, the same age as Diddy and Dixie. The two girls were blonde-haired, while the other two boys wore a lock on their heads and a propeller cap respectively. They looked very scared and looked tired, as they looked at Diddy and Dixie with some concern.

"We can't stay here! *Let's go away!*" exclaimed one of the girls before running off with everyone, including Diddy and Dixie, who were given small pushes to also run.

Diddy and Dixie were very confused by what they were saying, but anyway, they decided to accompany them and follow in their footsteps.

"What's going on?!" Diddy asked the kong children as he ran with them.

"There's a kidnapper gorilla on the loose around here!" replied the boy wearing the propeller cap, who was the shortest of the group. "He had caught us in that net!"

The group started running aimlessly, while Diddy and Dixie followed them, although they had no idea who they were or who the gorilla they mentioned was. They were running so fast, until minutes later, they stopped in an area far from where they had been recently. Suddenly, one of the chimpanzee girls fell to the ground as if she had lost her balance.

"Oh, no! Did you get hurt?" Diddy asked her worriedly, helping her to her feet almost immediately.

"No, don't worry. I'm fine," replied the girl, finishing getting up. But suddenly, everyone realized that she had hurt her leg as if it had been injured. "*Ugh!* My leg!" she exclaimed, showing pain.

"Oh, no! You hurt your leg, Mandy!" exclaimed the other girl going to help her.

"Oh, no, she must have gotten hurt with the fall," Dixie said worriedly and joined in to see her. "We are truly sorry!"

"No, don't worry, I'm used to it," replied the girl, rubbing her leg and regaining her posture, although walking with some difficulty. "By the way, thank you, for saving us! That very ugly and evil ape wanted to kidnap us and locked us in that net."

"Yes, be careful when walking in that area," added the shorter boy with a frightened expression. "That ape wanted to kill us!"

"Really?!" Dixie asked, looking shocked. "But what kind of ape was that?"

"We don't know, he's crazy," the other girl replied in kind. Then, he smiled a little at Diddy and Dixie. "But... I think that thanks to you we are safe."

"Yes, we didn't know how to get out of that net," added the taller boy, also smiling a little. "Seriously, thanks to you guys who showed up just in time."

The four children thanked Diddy and Dixie, which made them both feel very good about having rescued a group of unknown kongs from a dangerous situation.

"Oh, it's nothing," Dixie replied, smiling at them too. "How good that you have come out well."

"It's nothing," Diddy added in the same tone, before giving a look of strangeness. "And why did that ape kidnap you?"

"We didn't do anything to him, I think he's a psychopath," replied the girl who had hurt her leg. "Oh, and by the way... what are your names?"

"My name is Diddy."

"And I'm Dixie. Who are you?"

"I'm Mandy," replied the girl with the hurt leg, who wore a pink blouse and short blonde hair. "Nice to meet you, Diddy and Dixie."

"My name is Ricky," said one of the boys, who was wearing a yellow T-shirt and a lock on hair.

"I'm Jenny, nice to meet you," said the other girl with wavy blonde hair and a lavender and turquoise blouse.

"And I'm... Uhh..." stuttered the last boy, who was the shortest. "What was my name?"

"Ahh, his name is Melvyn," Mandy continued, laughing. "It's that he's a bit *clueless*."

"Clueless? What's wrong with you?!" Melvyn protested. He wore green overalls and his propeller cap.

"Oh, please, let's not start fighting," Jenny added, calming them before heading back to Diddy and Dixie. "Oh, excuse me, monkeys. And where are you from? Do you live around here?"

"Well, not exactly," Dixie replied. "We are only here on this island; *refugees*, so to speak."

"We live on another island far from here," Diddy added. "Do you live on this island?"

"No... Or well, yes, but it's that..." Ricky replied slowly.

"We don't have a home," Mandy continued in a somewhat low tone. "Well, we spend every day looking for where to sleep, we have no fixed place to live."

"Really?" Diddy asked them in confusion. "And... don't you live with your families or anyone?"

"We don't have any family, it's just the four of us," Jenny replied in a tone of seriousness.

"What?! So, you hang around alone?" Dixie asked, astonished.

"Yes, we've always been like this," replied the kong girl.

"By the way, do you know any place for us to stay?" Ricky asked them a little shyly. "It doesn't matter if it's temporary; we were looking for a space for ourselves these days."

Diddy and Dixie paused to think about it for a while. Until later, the two thought of the same place where they had been a short time ago.

"Well, here's an animal shelter," Diddy mentioned to the kong children. "You can stay there if you want. They'll receive them very well there, really."

"A shelter?" Jenny asked, somewhat doubtful. "Is that... with many animals?"

"Yes, in fact we were there when we arrived on this island," Dixie added. "It's a good place if you want to stay--"

"Uhh, no... Thank you for the suggestion," Mandy interrupted, smiling. "But we wanted a more private place. We'd just like a place for the four of us."

Diddy and Dixie thought about it again; the only place they could think of was the animal shelter. Obviously, they couldn't take them to Mr. Pinky's house without his permission. They kept wondering where they could take four lost children to shelter.

"I think I have an idea," Diddy said, smiling thoughtfully, before inviting the children. "Come, follow us."

Diddy and Dixie with the newly known group started walking for a while. Diddy guided the kong children to an empty tree house that he hadn't long ago found along with Dixie on one of his explorations of the island. That house was spacious, enough for about four little kongs, the only detail was that it was a little cracked in the walls and the roof was not completely covered.

"It's the only house we've ever seen," Diddy said to the four new children, pointing to it. "It just needs a few fixes and it'll be ready to inhabit it. You can stay here."

Everyone went up to the tree house to take a better look. The new kong children were watching the house in detail, and they thought for a minute, until they all made a smiling gesture later.

"Not bad!" Ricky commented as he continued to look at the house. "So, we'll stay here, what do you say?" he said to the other three in his group.

"Yes, I like it," Mandy replied in kind. "It looks to be sheltered from some danger."

"Thank you two so much," Jenny said to Diddy and Dixie, smiling. "I don't know what we would have done without you."

"No problem," Diddy replied, smiling back.

"Enjoy your home, and be careful," Dixie added in kind.

"Well, now if you'll excuse us... we have to leave," Diddy said goodbye to them. "See you later. It was a pleasure to meet you."

"Goodbye, nice to meet you too," the children replied simultaneously. "And thanks again."

After the little help to those four children, Diddy and Dixie happily said goodbye to them, and they also said goodbye to the two. Afterwards, both came down from the tree to leave and continue on their way to the lake where they planned to go.

"Hey!" the girl who was named Mandy called them from above, so they both turned around. "It's that... if it's not too much hassle... could you help us make some repairs to our house?"

Diddy and Dixie looked at each other for a few somewhat dubious seconds at first, as they both had their date pending at the time. But after thinking about it, it wouldn't be bad to lend a hand to those children to improve their new house; they always liked to help someone in trouble, so they agreed and went back up to the house to inspect it again.

"Hmm, I think it won't be difficult," Diddy said, looking closely at the house. "It'll only be necessary to cover the cracks and put a better roof on it."

"Well, we'll help you," Dixie added, smiling at them. "This will be fast."

The four kong children smiled at them too, and were somewhat excited.

Then, between the six of them, they worked as a team and began to do this "remodeling" of the house. It wasn't that hard after all; only a few pieces of wood could cover the cracks, and with a few branches and leaves they built the roof. While doing the work, out of nowhere they also began to talk a little.

"So... have you spent your whole life looking for shelters?" Dixie asked the children as they covered a crack.

"For as long as we can remember," Jenny replied, doing the same. "It hasn't been easy; we've had to survive a lot of things. But at the same time, living like this has allowed us to know many places and have a lot of adventures."

"Sounds great because of the adventures," Diddy said. "But difficult at the same time."

"As you can't imagine," Mandy added. "The hardest thing for us has been to make sure that some wild beast doesn't catch us."

"And why are you on this island?" the boy named Ricky asked Diddy and Dixie. "Are you on vacation or something?"

"It's a long story," Dixie replied. "Just telling you that we went through a zoo and a circus."

"And when we were about to return home, a storm brought us to this island," Diddy continued.

"A zoo and a circus? And why were you there?" Melvyn asked them, looking curious as a little child. "Were you circus stars?"

"No, I had been captured by the tamers of that circus, and Dixie went to my rescue," Diddy replied. "It was quite a hustle and bustle to cross that city."

"Wow, your story sounds exciting and funny," Mandy said, smiling at them.

"Oh, no, of course not," Dixie said in disgust as she recalled the circus. "If you knew the terrible things that happened there in that circus."

"In that circus, those tamers were complete savages," Diddy added in the same tone. "They were beasts."

"Wow... that doesn't sound exciting anymore," Mandy replied.

Several minutes later, the house was ready. Now it did look something more presentable and in good condition to live in. Everyone went out to the outside porch and was smiling when they saw the whole house completed.

"It turned out very well," Jenny commented as she looked closely at the house. Then, she turned again to Diddy and Dixie. "We thank you very much, seriously."

"You two are great!" Ricky said cheerfully to Diddy and Dixie. "You helped us a lot. Thank you, monkeys."

Diddy and Dixie felt great about saving and then helping a group of kongs children they had just met.

"It's nothing," Diddy said kindly. "Don't you need something? Maybe food?"

"Oh, no, don't worry," Melvyn replied, looking at them from his short stature. "We can take care of that. You have already done a lot for us. Thank you!"

"Oh, okay," Dixie replied, smiling at them. "It was a pleasure to have helped you."

"Hey, you guys look fun," Jenny said, smiling at them too. "Do you want to be our new friends?"

"Oh... Sure, why not?" Dixie replied in the same tone.

"Wow, we haven't had friends like us here," Diddy added with a small laugh. "Okay, we can be."

Diddy and Dixie, although in an improvised way and without knowing how it happened, decided to stay a while longer with those four kong children; it wouldn't be bad to make new friends in the middle of an island far from home. They both had liked the four new kong children very well and they had behaved very friendly with the two of them, so there would be no problem in sharing some time with them. For a moment, all of that reminded Diddy of when he had met Dixie, Kiddy, Tiny, and Chunky; he had also saved them from a dangerous situation and later befriended them. Likewise, Dixie remembered the same thing and, between times, she felt somewhat identified with those four new children; the situation was somewhat similar, so both of them didn't dare to ask those children any reckless questions.

The six were talking sitting in a circle on the floor of the house.

"So, you released all those animals from the zoo?" Melvyn asked them. "And did you fight those tamers in a helicopter? That's really impressive!"

"That's right," Diddy replied as they were told their recent history of the zoo. "In fact, all the animals are those that are now in the shelter that we had mentioned."

"Those from the circus are good friends of ours too," Dixie added.

"But now we can't go back to our island because of hurricane season," Diddy continued.

"And where are you living for the moment?" Jenny asked them.

"It's kind of funny," Dixie replied with a few small laughs. "But coincidentally we found on this island a teacher from the school where we went. He let us stay in his house until we could return."

"Mr. Pinky?!" the four of them asked with a shocked expression, which also astonished Diddy and Dixie.

"Yes, the same. Uhh... do you know him?" Diddy asked them, confused and looking at them strangely.

"Of course," Jenny replied, in amazement. "He was also our teacher when we went to school."

"Really?! What a coincidence," Dixie exclaimed, appearing surprised along with Diddy. "Do you go to school too?"

"Yes, for a year we went," Mandy said. "But school bored us and so we withdrew."

"By the way, did you go to school on your island?" Ricky asked Diddy and Dixie. "How was your classroom?"

"Bah! It was bad," Dixie replied, gesturing contemptuously. "Almost all our classmates were conceited, enlarged or unfriendly."

"And not to mention a group of four evil fools who always liked to bother us," Diddy added in disgust. "They were vandals."

"But were they cutes?" Jenny and Mandy asked them with a small laugh.

"Oh, of course not," Dixie replied. "One was a mocking mandrill with dusty, disheveled hairs. Another was a langur with red legs and gossip."

"Another was a monkey with a fluffy face and coffee hairs," Diddy continued. "Oh, and the most hateful was an orangutan with burnt-annatto hair. And no, we don't say it because they are, but because they were annoying and malevolent cretins who made fun of us."

"Can you believe that those stupid kids carried guns?" Dixie added. "They were thugs!"

"Guns?!" Ricky asked, showing himself shocked along with the others. "And... where did those kids get some of them?"

"They said their dads had them and so they stole them," Diddy replied. "But one day I took those guns off from them and threw them into the sea. I was friends with those kids, in fact. But from that day we ceased to be. After I did that, they threw me off a cliff."

"That's crazy," exclaimed Ricky, showing astonishment along with the group. "Those kids were really crazy."

"Oh, wow, so, those kids were terrible," Mandy said, frowning. "And how did you manage to take them off?"

"It's a long story," Diddy replied with a shrug.

"Wow, you guys have quite a few stories," Melvyn said with a shocked face.

Diddy and Dixie continued to talk to the group. They didn't know why, but they had liked those four children. The four were empathetic and very attentive to what they said, so Diddy had no problem telling them his story about his evil classmates; it was the second time he had openly told that story, and apparently he had no problem doing so anymore. In the same way, Dixie also told a little about her life since she had arrived on DK Island, although she didn't mention anything about her life before arriving there, as it was still a sensitive topic to tell for her.

A while later, it was being done later, and Diddy with Dixie still had a date pending, so they already had to say goodbye to the new children. They both got up and went out to the porch along with the four of them.

"Do you have to leave now?" the four asked them with expressions of still wanting to continue with the two of them.

"Yes, but we can come tomorrow if you want," Dixie suggested, smiling at them. "What do you say?"

"Of course," Ricky replied in the same way along with the group. "You just call us."

"Well, we'll see what time we can come," Dixie added. "It's that right now... we had a pending date."

"Are you two dating?" Jenny asked them curiously.

"Well... yes," Diddy replied, emitting small laughs with some shyness along with Dixie. "Yes, we are."

"Really?!" the four exclaimed, in amazement, and then the kong couple reaffirmed it.

"Wow, I see you're lucky, huh?" Ricky told them in a mischievous tone.

"Oh, how beautiful!" Mandy exclaimed in a tone of sweetness. "And since when have you been dating?"

"Not long ago," Diddy replied cheerfully before leaving with Dixie. "Well, we'll see you tomorrow. See you later."

"See you later!" answered the four of them.

Diddy and Dixie now said goodbye to them, came down from the house, and then left. Deep down, the two of them also wanted to stay another while longer, but they had their own date pending too, so they resumed their way to the lake where they were going to swim. It was more than mid-afternoon, but even so, they wouldn't miss either of their dates the two alone.

A minute later, they both turned to look again at the house that had been given to those new kong children.

"I liked them," Diddy said, smiling as he looked at the house.

"Me too," Dixie replied in the same way and with a few small laughs. "And well, what were we up to?" she added with a look and a defiant smile.

"No, no, I'll get there first," Diddy replied with the same gesture.

Both returned to compete for who arrived faster, without neglecting laughter and games. At the same time, they couldn't believe that from one moment to the next they had made new friends, which they never expected to happen to them on that island...

In the evening, Diddy and Dixie were again having dinner with Mr. Pinky at his house. They told him about their day, from when they had gone swimming in the lake until they had met their new friends, which was very new for Mr. Pinky. The two kongs told him how they had rescued them from kidnapping by a bad ape and then fixed a house for them to live in. The teacher was happy for them that they have made new friends of their age on that island, and much more that they have helped them from a dangerous situation.

"Wow, so you already have new friends, huh?" the teacher said to them, smiling. "Good for you."

"Yes, they are cool," Diddy replied cheerfully.

"And they told us they knew you, Mr. Pinky," Dixie added. "They say they were your students too."

"Really?!" the teacher exclaimed in amazement. "And... what are those children called?"

"Their names are Melvyn, Mandy, Jenny and Ricky," Diddy replied.

"Hmm... I don't think I remember having students with those names," the teacher replied, looking confused and pensive. "But with so many students I've had and so many schools I've taught, I don't usually remember the names much, unless there was a highlight moment."

"Well, they also told us they only went to school for a year," Dixie added with a shrug.

"That could explain things better," Mr. Pinky concluded.

The three of them finished dinner and left everything in order. Later, everyone went to their resting place.

Diddy and Dixie were now in their room. Both were sitting and swinging at low speed in one of the hammocks next to the window overlooking the outside. Almost every night they used to spend some time together before sleeping.

"Wow, I didn't expect to make new friends like us on this island," Diddy said.

"Me neither, it's fun to have new friends," Dixie added cheerfully.

"I just hope they're good friends, but they seem to be anyways," Diddy added before a moment of silence. "You know? I have been thinking, and I think this journey hasn't been all bad, that is, we saved a big herd of animals, we became friends with some of them, we are far from those foolish school thugs, Mr. Pinky is no longer overbearing, and today we met new friends."

"That's true," Dixie replied. "It hasn't been such a bad vacation regardless; it's been like an adventure. And this island is very pretty too."

"And best of all," Diddy added, starting to blush a little, "it's you, Dix... I wish all this happened between us earlier on DK Island, but even so, you have made these bad days not have been at all."

"Oh, Diddy. You've made me very happy these days, too," Dixie said blushing too, before hugging him affectionately, to which Diddy couldn't help but smile and blush more. "You are my favorite monkey."

Then, Diddy looked into her eyes for a while, as stroking her cheek, and then kissed her on the lips tenderly. When they parted, smiled at each other and emitted small laughs.

"By the way, I was thinking if we could go somewhere fun tomorrow," Diddy suggested after a while. "And... do you think if we also took those new friends we met?"

"I was thinking the same thing," Dixie replied, smiling. "What if we also took them to many more places? We can also play and explore this island with them."

"Sure, it sounds great," Diddy added excitedly. "Wow, this reminds me of when I had just met you, Chunky, Kiddy and Tiny."

"Me too," Dixie replied, laughing. "Some things that happen to us here remind me of that, we were also your new friends and you took us for a walk around DK Island."

"Yes, it's too similar," Diddy said before getting out of the hammock later. "Well, I think it's time to sleep. Rest well, Dix."

"Rest well, too, Diddy."

Diddy gave Dixie a kiss on the cheek, and then went to lie down to sleep in the other hammock. They both fell asleep, hoping the next day to see their new friends again; they hoped to get to know them a little more and wondered if a good friendship would emerge with them.

Chapter 37: Hanging Out Day

The next morning, Diddy and Dixie said goodbye to the teacher and, before long, they were heading to visit their new friends. They still didn't know how it all happened in a single day, but they were excited to have met new kongs their age.

When they got to their house, they went up. The first thing they would do was knock on the door, but they stopped when they discovered that it was wide open. They approached to look inside the house, but for some reason... there was no one.

"Where did they go?" Dixie questioned, looking into the house.

"Oh, no. Maybe that bad gorilla they were talking about took them away?" Diddy said worriedly.

"I don't think so, maybe they just went out to eat or something," Dixie speculated. "Why don't we come back later?"

Diddy and Dixie searched around the house, but there was no trace of either of the four kids. Both began to worry a little and feared that something bad had happened to them, since they hadn't even left the door closed. But they didn't want to think about the worst yet, so they decided to leave.

They both headed back to Mr. Pinky's house. They waited until after noon to return back to the house of their new friends, and they did.

In the afternoon, Diddy and Dixie returned again to the new kongs' house. They hoped that this time they would find them at home, but to their surprise... they were also not present and, moreover, the door was still open. That was really worrying for both of them. Then, they came down from the house while wondering where those children were.

"How strange," Dixie said pensively. "They don't seem to have been here; the house is just as we found it this morning."

"Diddy! Dixie!" a female voice that seemed to belong to a kong girl exclaimed behind them.

They turned to look and realized that it was those children, who were in the distance heading towards them. They were both glad to find them and relieved to see that they were okay... In fact, the four of them looked somewhat more presentable than the day before. They even wore different clothes; for start, the two girls now wore ribbons in their hair: Mandy wore a red bow in addition one fuchsia vest over her pink blouse, while Jenny now had a ribbon paired with her blouse and hair pulled back with a bow; as for the boys, Ricky now wore a blue shirt over his yellow T-shirt, while Melvyn now wore a red and white striped T-shirt under his overalls.

Diddy and Dixie were surprised at first to see them, as they now seemed to look like normal children and no longer as much as lost children as they were the day before. But anyway, they smiled to see that they were okay.

"Hi! How are you?" Dixie said to them as they arrived, and they returned the greeting. "We were looking for you."

"Yeah, we had come in the morning but we didn't find you here," Diddy added. "I thought something had happened to you."

"Oh, no, nothing happened," Jenny replied with a little laugh. "We had gone to look for food and just arrived."

"And besides... we went to heal Mandy's leg," Ricky added, pointing to Mandy, who could now walk normally, unlike the day before. "She's already better and can walk well."

"Really? Did she recover so quickly from an... injury?" Diddy questioned, looking at her strangely.

"Yeah, it's that... Well, it wasn't so serious after all," Melvyn replied. "We found a medicine ape who was able to help us heal her injury."

Diddy and Dixie were somewhat confused and looked at them strangely at what they said. But they didn't take much importance since at least, the kong girl was already well after the fall of the previous day.

"Wow, and how did he make her recover quickly?" Dixie asked, pointing again to Mandy's leg.

"Well... is that he told me to immerse myself in a spring with medicinal waters," Mandy replied with a smile with her teeth. "And we saw that it worked a lot, I already feel the best."

Diddy and Dixie showed a face of not being entirely convinced of what they were saying; their anecdote sounded like a fictional tale that they even wanted to laugh at, but they held back and decided to continue.

"Well, the good thing is that she's recovered," Diddy said, trying not to laugh. "So, it mustn't have been so serious."

"Hey, by the way, do you want to go for a walk with us today?" Dixie proposed. "We were going out again with Diddy and wanted to know if you guys wanted to come too."

"Oh, sure! If you say so," Jenny replied excitedly along with the others.

"And where can we go?" Melvyn asked them in the same way.

"Well, we have some places in mind," Dixie said as she thought about it for a while. "Do you like extreme activities?"

"Extreme in what sense?" Ricky asked them.

"You know, to have fun in high places or throw ourselves from high heights," Dixie replied, smiling with excitement.

"Uhh, well..." Jenny replied, showing a forced smile. "We're just a little scared of heights and stuff like that."

"Oh, don't worry, it won't be too bad," Dixie told them, smiling at them.

Diddy and Dixie then took the four children to one of their favorite places they visited in recent weeks. They walked for long minutes until they finally arrived. It was a mountain of medium

height that had several paths around it to climb it. The four kong children were astonished as they looked up at it.

"Come, let's go up!" Diddy motioned them upwards.

The whole group began to climb the mountain paths, which were somewhat narrow, so they had to go one after the other. When they had reached a considerable height, they stopped to contemplate the environment.

"Wow, it's amazing!" Ricky said without looking away from the panorama along with the other three kids. "We can see much of the island here."

"It's like being on top of the whole island," Mandy added in the same way.

"And there is even more. Come this way," Dixie pointed out.

Diddy and Dixie led the four kids to another corner of the mountain. At that new point, it could see a huge slope of smooth appearance that headed toward the ground where the mountain began. Diddy and Dixie used to slide down like a ski slope.

"Let's go! We're going to go down here," Diddy announced, standing with Dixie on the edge of the slope.

"W-what?... Over here?!" Mandy exclaimed, showing a fearful expression. "But it's very high."

"Come on, nothing will happen. We'll fall on those bushes over there," Dixie pointed to a pile of bushes on the ground, right where the mountain began.

The four children seemed not so enthusiastic about the idea of going down from such a considerable height, since they were insecure and feared of being able to go down.

"I'd like to try. B-but... we can hurt ourselves," Jenny added in a trembling voice. "What if any of us get hurt again?"

"Oh, come on!" Dixie said, turning with Diddy towards them. "Then we'll hold you."

"No, no, wait ..."

Diddy took Ricky and Melvyn by the arms, while Dixie held Jenny and Mandy, and then they all began to slide down the slope. Diddy and Dixie showed a face of excitement as they felt the adrenaline, unlike the other four, who only screamed while clinging to Diddy and Dixie.

When they reached the end of the slope, they landed on the leafy bushes that were there. The four of them, peeking out of the bushes again, had frightened faces as they breathed heavily.

"Did you see? Nothing happened to us," Diddy told them, calming them down.

"Hey... it wasn't too bad," Ricky said, starting to smile and adjusting his shirt.

"It was fun after all," Jenny added, finally showing excitement.

"Do you want to go somewhere else now?" Dixie suggested, smiling at them.

Diddy and Dixie continued the walk and now took their new friends elsewhere. This time, it was a huge cliff that surrounded an extensive lake, but which, in turn, had several vines crossed from end to end above the lake. Diddy and Dixie used to swing on all the vines in that place and, on some occasions, throw themselves into the lake from that great height.

"Wow, this place is amazing," Mandy said with a big smile, peering intently at the landscape. "It's so beautiful!"

"Come, let's go up to the vines. You're going to like this," Diddy told them as he brought a pair of thick vines and handed one to Dixie.

Both kongs linked the vines to ones that were extended above the cliff. Those vines would end up descending towards the ground on the other side of the cliff.

"Will we go down there on... those vines?" Melvyn asked them with some trepidation, to which Diddy and Dixie nodded.

"But... what if we fall?" Mandy questioned in the same tone.

"Don't worry, we've come down here a bunch of times," Dixie said as she took the girls again by the arms and Diddy took the boys the same way.

"Besides, if we fall, it'll be into the water," Diddy added.

The four of them were as if they wanted to try, and at the same time, as if they were afraid. But Diddy and Dixie finished convincing them, and each of the two held on to a vine, while the other four held on to them. Then, they threw themselves into the void as an aerial transporter. Everyone was as if they were riding some amusement park game. Diddy and Dixie screamed with excitement as they descended at speed... while their new friends screamed in terror and clung to both of them tighter.

"Hold on! We're going to land!" Dixie exclaimed.

Diddy with the other two boys landed on dry land first, but Dixie with the girls could not land completely, so Dixie let go of the vine and used her hair to land. Being all on dry land, the four of them were only agitated, with one hand on their chest and panicked faces, although they later smiled.

"Hey! That was great," Jenny said, smiling again along with the others.

"You're right! It was fun," Melvyn added.

"Well, how about we get into the water now?" Dixie suggested as she headed with Diddy toward the lake in front of them.

"Uhh, no, no, no!" the four of them hurriedly exclaimed.

"Huh? Why not?" asked Diddy, still smiling at them.

"It's that... Well... *we don't know how to swim*," Mandy replied slowly. "Why don't we go somewhere else?"

"Really?" Dixie asked them, surprised. "Oh, don't worry, we won't swim in the deep areas and we'll save you if something happens to you," she added, smiling at them.

Suddenly, a few drops of water were beginning to fall on them, and they were falling more and more around.

"Look, it's starting to rain!" Diddy exclaimed, jumping with excitement and pointing to the sky. "We can bathe and jump in puddles."

"*Oh, no! WATER!*" the four of them screamed suddenly in a desperate way as they began to run in an aimless direction.

Diddy and Dixie looked at them weirdly at their reactions, and then began to chase after them. The four kids ran in terror as if they were being chased by a beast, until later, they stopped under a huge and leafy tree that had enough capacity to cover them from the rain. Diddy and Dixie arrived where they were, and saw that the four of them were frightened and trembling.

"Hey, what's wrong with you?" Diddy asked, looking at them still strangely. "Are you... afraid of the rain?"

"Oh... we'll tell you the truth," Jenny replied as she trembled along with the group. "*We don't* like water, and we don't want to get wet."

"What?!" Dixie exclaimed in surprise along with Diddy. "But why? Who doesn't love water!"

"It's t-that you wouldn't understand... How do we explain this to you?" Melvyn replied with a stutter. "Allergies! We suffer from water allergies."

"What?! Really? The four of you?" Diddy questioned, placing his hands at his sides, to which the four nodded still trembling. "And... so, how do you bathe?"

"Well... with *special waters*," replied Mandy.

Diddy and Dixie looked at each other with a disguised smile in a dubious way; they were starting to think that maybe their new friends were a little weird. But even so, they knew that they would have to understand them well before thinking like this.

"Wait a minute, and hadn't you said that Mandy healed her injury in *medicinal waters*?"

"Yes, with that same kind of water we bathe and we also drink it when we get thirsty," Ricky replied. "The medicine ape we mentioned has helped us a lot with our allergies."

"Wow, I've never heard about water allergies," Diddy said, surprised at that. "It must be uncommon. Have you always had them or what?"

"Yes, and it has been hard to deal with," Jenny replied with a shrug, "we've hardly ever been able to enjoy the beach or the lakes. And not to mention when we have to cross from island to island by sea, it's terrible!"

Diddy and Dixie looked at each other quickly again, as if they were surprised at what their new friends were telling them.

"Oh, that sounds very bad," Dixie commented in a tone of compassion, "not being able to enjoy the water because of allergies."

"How bad," Diddy added in the same way.

Suddenly, a few drops began to fall through the holes between the leaves of the tree, which only made the group of kong children run out again, although this time under the same tree. The four moved to a corner where they had more leaves on top to protect them from the rain. Diddy and Dixie went to follow them immediately.

"Here I think we'll be safer," Mandy said as she clung to the group and they looked fearful.

"Wow, we didn't know this about you," Diddy said when he saw them. "We're really sorry."

"Don't worry," Ricky replied, smiling a little. "We've lived with this since we were little. Our allergies I think are already from birth."

"Too bad, I never imagined anyone would have them," Dixie added.

Diddy and Dixie also sat with them in the same corner; while they wanted to go out and have fun with their new friends, they also wanted to respect their situation and decision to take refuge from the water. The rain continued to fall, although minutes later, it calmed down a bit.

"Hey... can I ask you something?" Dixie said later, to which the group nodded. "Have you... really always been alone? Haven't you had a fixed home?" she asked them with some insecurity.

The four of them all looked at each other with serious faces for a few seconds, although they didn't seem to have any problem answering them anyway.

"Well... yes, the four of us have always been alone," Jenny replied, looking serious. "You see, we... were abandoned by our parents when we were toddlers."

"What?!" exclaimed Diddy and Dixie successively. "So... from a very *young age*?"

"Yes, it was a time when there was a massive abandonment of children," Ricky replied in the same way. "Not only us, but many other ape children were abandoned in the middle of an island and left alone. We don't remember much about our parents."

"It was hard to survive among us, but we had to get used to it," Melvyn added with a low look. "And not to mention that the other children treated us the worst; they always did us evil and told us that we were weirdos... They also made fun of our allergies!"

"Oh, no, how cruel those children were," Dixie said, hands at her sides.

"But so... no one else has taken care of you?" Diddy asked them.

"Just some gorilla ones, but they also abandoned us," replied Mandy. "The four of us have been best friends all our lives, and we were tired of living with those other stupid kids and that's why we decided to make our own lives and left that island. Sometimes we have met them again, but we just greet them; we don't get along with them."

"And from there, we have gone from island to island moving," Ricky added.

"But even so, we haven't been able to find a good home where we can live peacefully," Jenny finished before heaving a sigh. "Not to mention that many animals we've met have treated us like trash."

Diddy and Dixie were shocked by what they were saying. Diddy, for a moment, remembered his classmates from school for the way the four of them were treated by the children they mentioned. Dixie also remembered again when she and her family were fugitives. Now they understood why those four kong children walked alone with no fixed place. They felt a little guilty for thinking that they were weird because of their attitudes, so they began to have a little more compassion for them. After all, they had liked the four of them and didn't understand how other ones could treat them as they mentioned, because they didn't seem to be bad children at all.

"Wow... it's like being in our classroom," Diddy said. "And... why were they abandoning children? What kind of parents would do that?"

"We never knew why," Melvyn replied with a shrug. "But we don't care much about them anymore."

"Wow, we're really sorry," Diddy said in a tone of compassion. "We didn't know that."

"Yes... but that's what we had to live," Ricky replied before sighing. "The only current bad thing is that we have hardly been able to make any more friends."

"Well... but at least you're okay," Dixie said, smiling at them. "And we can also be your friends."

"Yeah, we won't stay here forever," Diddy added, "someday we'll return to our island. But we can be very good friends while we are on this island."

"And please... excuse us," Dixie added with a little embarrassment. "I see that you don't like heights and water; so sorry to make you come down from that mountain or that cliff."

"Oh, no, don't worry about that," Ricky replied with a little laugh. "It was fun after all... Although we do fear heights."

"Look! It's stopped raining," Mandy said, pointing skyward. "What if we continue visiting places?"

"Oh, right," Dixie replied, smiling at them. "This time we can go to some waterfalls. And don't worry, we won't get into the water or do anything extreme, we promise."

"Okay, so let's go," replied Ricky cheerfully along with the group.

The rain had stopped by then, so Diddy and Dixie led their new friends to another place they had been visiting frequently in those days. This time, it was a hill from where it could see a huge waterfall that was beyond the lake; the place looked so nice, that the new kong children were amazed at the view they had.

"Wow, look at that!" exclaimed the kong children looking at each other as they pointed towards the waterfall in the distance.

"Hey, that's awesome," Melvyn added, jumping with excitement. "I think we hadn't seen this."

"It's something to take a dip in," Mandy said excitedly, before looking down. "Oh, but our allergies don't allow us to."

"Don't worry, we can go see it up close anyway," Dixie told them, smiling at them.

"Come, let's go down there," Diddy added, pointing in one direction. "So, we can go and look at it better."

The six kongs began to walk until they reached a downhill path that seemed to be heading towards the ground, from where the river and waterfalls could be seen up close. Diddy and Dixie were the ones who went to the front to guide the other children; this time they would go to make a calmer plan.

"By the way, what was your island's name?" Jenny asked the two curiously as they walked.

"DK Island," Diddy and Dixie replied.

"DK Island?!" exclaimed the children, opening their eyes fullest as if they were shocked.

"What?... Do you know it?!" asked Diddy and Dixie, also shocked at their reaction.

"Of course," Jenny replied.

Diddy and Dixie stopped and gaped; they felt as if a little hope came back to them upon hearing that, and they thought that maybe those four kong children would have some valuable information for the two of them.

"Really?!" exclaimed the two excitedly and with a small air of hope returning to them.

"Uh, do we know that island?" Melvyn asked, looking confused.

"Yes, Melvyn, do you remember that gorilla's head shaped island?" replied Mandy, turning the propeller of Melvyn's cap. "You are a forgetful clueless."

"I'm not clueless!" Melvyn protested.

"We had stopped on that island once," Ricky said, which surprised Diddy and Dixie more, "but we stayed only for a day. Although we didn't have time to meet the inhabitants there."

"Really?!" Diddy asked them, waiting for a positive answer and looking at Dixie each other. "So... just in case, do you know the way to get there? Tell us yes, please!"

"Yes, but it's far away, and besides... it's *hurricane season*," Mandy replied. "It's difficult to sail through the sea in this storm."

"Yeah, we know," Dixie added in a low tone. "But... Really, is it really *too far* away?"

"Yes, and so far away," Jenny replied. "We can only tell you that we have crossed about twenty islands after leaving there."

Diddy and Dixie's hopes remained low after hearing that; they had already heard from several animals that hurricanes were a real obstacle to sailing in that storm.

"Wow, I think you're some of the few ones here who know DK Island," Diddy said before toning down. "What we want most now is to return to our island."

"Yeah, we don't know anything about our family and friends over there," Dixie added likewise. "You don't know how we wish we could go back, but we can't now. Even in the first days we were going to do it and we almost died trying."

"Wow, that must be very hard," Jenny said in a compassionate tone. "They must also be worried about you."

"Yeah, they really do," Diddy replied in the same tone. "And they must seriously be worried."

"Why had you run away from home when those tamers captured you, Diddy?" Melvyn asked.

"Well, it's not like I ran away or anything," Diddy replied. "I was just frustrated by something from school, and I decided to go out and think for a while, but I didn't know that the weather was very bad and I went out to sea, until those circus men caught me."

"That sounds scary," Mandy said, showing concern. "That has never happened to us in the middle of the sea or by humans."

"And it really was terrifying," Diddy added, "and much more the things we saw in that circus... And now here we are, unable to return home for a long time."

"Hey, but don't worry, you'll be fine here anyway," Ricky told them, trying to cheer them up. "And we can also be your friends and accompany you until you can return."

"Well, in part it wasn't all bad," Dixie added, smiling a little along with Diddy. "The good thing is that so far everything has been quiet."

"And by the way, since we're talking about this," said Diddy, "what did you do on DK Island when you went?"

"We just went in passing," Jenny replied. "We had been stranded and took refuge there for one night. The next day we left."

"Wow, look at this!" Melvyn exclaimed after a while, pointing to the huge waterfall. "I hadn't seen this place up close."

"Hey, this place is great to walk in!" Mandy added, looking closely at the site.

"I knew you were going to like it," Diddy said cheerfully. "Here we usually come."

At the site, besides the waterfalls and the river, there were also some big rocks on the latter, which were spacious enough to perch on. Suddenly, Melvyn headed towards this rocks area and climbed into them with several jumps.

"Hey, be careful, Melvyn!" Ricky told him, heading to stop him, although he didn't do it when he saw water around.

"It's okay, it's all right," Melvyn replied before jumping onto another rock. "I won't fall into the water from here."

Suddenly, Jenny and Mandy also joined to climb the rocks to start jumping one by one.

"Hey, you girls too?!" Ricky told them, hands on his sides. "We can't touch the water."

"Oh, it's not that high here," Jenny replied with a shrug, before moving on. "It doesn't look dangerous."

"Yeah, come too, Ricky," Mandy added in the same way. "Don't be a killjoy"

Then, Diddy and Dixie also joined the activity along with their new friends, and Ricky joined later, although somewhat fearful, but both helped him to continue.

"Hey, this isn't bad at all," Jenny commented on the walk and looking around. "It's like exploring."

"Do you like adventures to explore?" Diddy asked them.

"Of course," replied Mandy. "We have them very often, although as you know... sometimes we have encountered certain dangers."

Later, the group of kong children, including Diddy and Dixie, stopped at some big rocks, where they only had pure running water and the waterfalls in front, therefore, they only stayed to look at the surroundings.

"Wow, I think we should explore this island more often," Melvyn said, smiling as they watched it all.

"How long have you been on this island?" Dixie asked them curiously.

"Barely a month," Jenny replied. "Although a couple of years ago we also passed through here."

"Before this island, we lived on another one," Ricky added, before turning in a serious tone. "Although in that one we did have many mishaps, especially with other animals."

"Really?" Diddy exclaimed.

"Yes, nobody wanted us there," Mandy added in the same way. "We were always kicked out of everywhere we stayed, treated badly, or made fun of; they said we were nuisances."

"They even made fun of our allergies too," Melvyn added in a tone of sadness. "We were told that we are weird kids. Even when we tried to make friends with other children, they laughed at us for it and even threw water at us on purpose."

"Wow, what a bad vibe they all had," Diddy said, in an astonished and compassionate tone. "Why would you be treated like that?"

"What bad ones," Dixie added in the same way. "It can't be possible that you have been treated so ugly... You are not weird or seen as a nuisance."

"Do you believe it?" Jenny asked them still seriously. "Don't you think we're weird because of our allergies?"

"Hey, of course not," Dixie replied, trying to cheer them up. "I mean, we've never heard of that, but it's also not something that you are to blame for having. And don't worry, we'll understand... and we can also be their friends," she finished, smiling at them just like Diddy.

"Wow..." Mandy said, looking at the other three kids, before smiling. "I think you are the first or the few ones who have not told us something ugly."

"You guys are so kind," Melvyn added, smiling at them both. "We had never been treated like this."

"Really? Nobody?" Dixie asked them in a tone of concern and shocked at the same time.

"At least the ones we've interacted with, no," Jenny replied.

"Geez, how terrible," Dixie said, pitied, but then continued to try to cheer them up. "Well, but as I told you... You don't seem strange to us because of those allergies or anything, or because of your way of being, that is, you also look very kind."

"Oh... we really appreciate it from you," Ricky replied, smiling at them along with the other three kids. "That has been very cordial on your part; I hope we can be good friends."

"Of course," Diddy replied in kind. "Don't worry."

The new kong children smiled at Diddy and Dixie again, making them feel very good that they had given them some cheer. Then, the six stayed another time talking, this time about different and more joyful topics. Later, they were about to leave from that place.

"Hey, I think it's already a little late," Jenny said, looking up at the sky. "Why don't we go home?"

"Good, but what do you think if we play something?" Diddy proposed, playfully. "Do we make a race for who gets there first?"

"Okay!" they all answered in the same way, and then successively. "That sounds fun."

The six kongs returned again to the dry ground through the rocks, and then began to run towards the house in competition; they were pushing each other to get there first. It had been a while since Diddy and Dixie had played in large groups like this, and they felt good to do it again.

Later, they came to the house of their new friends. Almost all arrived equally, so the proposed game had been left in dilemmas to agree who had been the winners.

"No, I arrived first!" Melvyn exclaimed, jostling with the group.

"No, it was me!" Mandy replied in the same way. "I beat all of you, even Jenny; Jenny is a cheater and takes shortcuts!"

"I'm not a cheater!" Jenny replied. "The way I came from was also valid."

"Hey, stop the fighting," Ricky snapped, interjecting. "Let's finish this better in draws," he added, calming them down, before talking to Diddy and Dixie. "That's how they are... And right, Diddy and Dixie, don't you want to stay in our house for a while?"

"Yeah, we're going to keep playing," Melvyn added, grabbing them by the arms with excitement.

"Oh, sure, why not?" Diddy replied, smiling along with Dixie. "We'll stay with you for a while longer."

"This day has been fun, after all," Mandy said cheerfully.

Then, everyone went upstairs to the house and continued to hang out in company. They talked about various topics in their lives, as they now seemed to be getting to know each other better.

Diddy and Dixie also told them about DK Island and their friends and family there. Likewise, the four new kongs told them more about themselves and their journeys. Between times, they laughed or told jokes, and later they did more group games. It was a pleasant time, since in recent times, Diddy and Dixie didn't usually meet kongs contemporary to them with whom they could share in that way.

They stayed together until it was dark. Later, Diddy and Dixie had to return to dinner at Mr. Pinky's house, but not before... having agreed with their new friends to meet again the next day at their house, even at night, as they all felt that the time they had spent together, hadn't been enough. Diddy and Dixie were even surprised at how good it felt to them to spend more time with their new friends, and they were happy about it.

A/N: By the way, those new kids are also my OCs. These are their conceptual designs:

MEL VYN



JENNY



RICKY



MANDY



Chapter 38: A New Friendship

The next day, and even in the evening, Diddy and Dixie returned again to the house of their new friends, very excited to see them again. In the day, they all had spent some time outside, in fact, they had returned to almost the same places as the previous day, although this time they no longer did extreme activities. Anyway, with quiet plans they also had a great time with their new friends. They even took them to other places where they both used to go for walks and have fun. Between times, they also played group games in the middle of their journeys around the island, with which they had a lot of fun.

During the night, although at first all six were gathered in a group, a while later they were divided into boys and girls. Dixie was reunited with Mandy and Jenny, while Diddy with Melvyn and Ricky.

Diddy, along with the other two boys, were in a clear area near the house, playing target shooting with bows made of branches and vines.

"It's your turn, Diddy," Ricky said defiantly. "Let's see if you can get it right."

"Well, check this out," Diddy replied, preparing his bow and pointing toward the center of a circle drawn on a tree.

Diddy stretched the arrow back and released it, then got it to dig right into the center of the circle. Then, he shot more arrows at other targets they had set, and he hit them all perfectly, unlike Ricky and Melvyn, who only came within a few centimeters of hitting the center circles. Diddy was jumping around in victory when his turn ended, while the other two boys were astonished.

"Wow, you're an expert at this!" Melvyn exclaimed in amazement. "It seems that now I do believe that you have been able to fight against a lizard king along with your uncle."

"You should teach us!" Ricky added in the same way.

"Will we play another round now or what?" Diddy suggested to them defiantly.

The three boys again began to compete for who did it best, where Diddy usually won in most rounds. But he also taught the other two kids to perfect their shooting and they did quite well. Truth be told, Diddy felt so good about being able to play with other kids. And while they played, they were talking.

"Hey, Diddy, and how has it been with Dixie?" Ricky asked in a mischievous tone.

"Well, the best," Diddy replied, smiling as he shot another arrow.

"And do you love her very much?" Melvyn added in the same tone.

"Too much. She's incredible," Diddy replied before giving a small sigh. "More than just my girlfriend, she's the best friend I've ever met."

"Wow, buddy, and how did you manage to win her heart, huh?" Ricky asked curiously and gave him little pushes.

"Well, I don't know, I could say it just happened," Diddy replied, shrugging and smiling. "We were very good friends for a long time. I liked her a lot, and when I was finally going to tell her, she told me that she liked me too... And she also told me that she already knew."

"Really? And how did she find out?" Melvyn asked, showing surprise.

"Because those four fools from school told her," Diddy replied, rolling his eyes as he remembered them. "They had stolen a notebook where I had Dixie's name written on a heart and showed it to her."

"What?!" Melvyn exclaimed before crossing his arms. "Geez, how evil."

"Oh, those classmates you had were really bad," Ricky commented with disgust.

"Hey, Diddy, and what do you like most about Dixie?" Melvyn asked curiously afterwards. "Her face? Her eyes?"

"Or her hair?" Ricky continued, also showing curiosity.

"Well, of course, she's so cute," Diddy replied, smiling before pausing. "But what I like most about her is that she can achieve a lot of things, and no matter what happens, she's very strong. Don't tell her this, but... sometimes I think she's even braver than I am," he whispered in the last sentence. "And besides, I feel that I can count on her and she always listens and understands me... Really, she's so nice," he finished without stopping to smile.

Suddenly, Ricky and Melvyn just stared at him somewhat confused and silent for a while, which earned the same look from Diddy.

"What?" Diddy asked them with a little laughter when he saw them like that.

"It's that... I've never heard anyone say that's what he likes most about his girlfriend," Ricky replied.

"Neither do I," Melvyn added. "My ex-girlfriend was not how you described her."

"Have you ever had a girlfriend?" Diddy asked them curiously.

"Well, I had one but a few days later she came out saying she never felt anything for me," Ricky replied, rolling his eyes. "She told me that she only loved me because she thought I was handsome and because she wanted me to take her with us on our adventures... And by the way, I even found out later that she already had another boyfriend, and I was her second choice."

"I had a girlfriend a long time ago," Melvyn said in a tone of disappointment. "But the week after we were dating, she asked me to give her some time. And you know what, I found out she had three more boyfriends. That's why I don't trust girls again."

"Wow, that must have been so disappointing," Diddy said, looking at them with compassion as the two boys continued to show frustration after telling their love experiences. "I didn't know that either; it must have ended very badly for you."

"And it really ended badly, I was almost beaten up by that other boyfriend my ex-girlfriend had," Ricky added in the same tone of disappointment, before shrugging his shoulders. "But what can be done?"

"Hey, but don't worry," Diddy said, trying to cheer them up. "You may someday have another opportunity to love someone, although you may need to be patient."

"We'll see," Melvyn replied with a shrug as well. "Although at the moment I'm not thinking about love."

"By the way, Diddy, and there are more pretty girls at your school?" Ricky asked, mischievously.

"Well, I don't know what your tastes are," Diddy replied, looking at them strangely and with a little laughter. "But they are unfriendly... By the way, and by any chance haven't you liked Jenny or Mandy or something?"

"Oh, no, of course not," Ricky replied with a little laugh. "They are like our sisters; we have known them all our lives."

"We couldn't see them that way," Melvyn added before looking in one direction at the trees.

Diddy finished his arrow throws, winning almost all of them again.

"Hey, what if we shoot that tree farther away now?" Melvyn suggested.

Meanwhile, on the other hand, the girls were gathered: Dixie with Jenny and Mandy were under a tree near the house. They, on the other hand, were sharing girl activities. Dixie was styling the blonde hairs of the other two girls, and when she finished, put their hair ribbons back on each one.

"It's done," Dixie said, smiling at them.

"Wow... how did you do this in our hair, Dixie?" Jenny said, looking at her hair styled along with Mandy, looking amazed and smiling at the same time.

"I never learned to do hairstyles, my hair is very short," Mandy added, taking her own short shoulder length hair. "You have to teach us more, Dixie."

"Yeah, I want to learn too," Jenny said, before waving an arm at Dixie. "How about we now style your hair, Dixie?"

"Of course, girls," Dixie replied smiling. "Let's see how it turns out."

Then, the two kong girls began to brush Dixie's long hair while talking as well. In the same way, she also felt comfortable spending time with new friends.

"Wow, Dixie, you have beautiful hair," Jenny commented as she styled Dixie's hair. "I wish I had it like you."

"Oh, thank you," Dixie replied, smiling kindly. "You have pretty hair too, Jenny, it's so soft and defined. And I like its color."

"Oh, thank you. But yours is long, shiny, silky, smells good... and *it can fly*," Jenny added, admiring her hair with excitement.

"You also have cute eyes, Dixie," Mandy said, smiling and pointing at them.

"But yours are too," Dixie replied in kind.

"You're so cute, Dixie. Diddy must be very lucky to have you as his girlfriend," Jenny told her in a mischievous tone. "By the way, how has it been for you with him?"

"Oh, what can I say, we've done great," Dixie replied with a smile and blushing a little. "He's such a cute monkey. He's very nice with me, and I love him very much."

"How beautiful!" Mandy exclaimed sweetly. "And you both never fight?"

"Well, I could say that we only sometimes discuss who sleeps by the window," Dixie replied with a laugh.

"And how was your first kiss?" Mandy asked curiously.

"Oh, it was somewhat strange," Dixie replied, blushing and smiling. "I can tell you that it was the last thing that happened to us before the storm dragged us here. First, we were talking and then we were silent, and suddenly, we just looked at each other and... it happened. In that boat I didn't even have anywhere to run afterwards, I never expected my first kiss to be at that moment."

"Oh, how romantic!" Jenny said in a touching tone. "And how did he ask you to be his girlfriend?"

"Well, that's a long story. First of all, I already knew he liked me. The group of those four foolish kids from school told me; at first, I didn't want to believe them, but then I took a good look at how Diddy acted with me and I could confirm it."

"Oh, no," Mandy said, her hands at her sides. "Those bad kids ruined the surprise."

"I see that those four bad kids from your school have made your lives miserable," Jenny added with a frown.

"Too much, they were first-rate nosy kids," Dixie added, rolling her eyes. "And answering your question: so, after the zoo, we arrived on this island and began to have more closeness, until finally we told each other what we felt. And then, one night we went for a walk near a colorful lake and that's where we became a couple."

"Wow, your story is very tender and adventurous at the same time," Mandy said with a little laugh. "You both have been accidentally traveling from one place to another."

"Yeah. But at least... we made it after all," Dixie added, smiling and starting to blush again. "We're already in love as we both wanted... And besides, we saved a lot of animals," she added with a slight laugh.

"Oh, you're a nice couple!" Jenny commented with excitement. "You'll be our favorite couple."

"And what do you like most about him, Dixie?" Mandy asked curiously. "His eyes, his nose, his face?"

"Does he say a lot of cute things to you *all* the time?"

"Well, of course I like everything about him; he's a cute monkey," Dixie replied, smiling. "He's a little shy to express himself in that loving way, but... he listens to me and makes me smile when I'm fine and when I'm not, too. He has never pretended to be someone different; he shows himself as he is. And besides, he's very brave... He says no, but he really is," she whispered in the last sentence before pausing and sighing. "He's really so cute."

Suddenly, Jenny and Mandy stared at her with a look of strangeness for a while.

"Wow..." Jenny said with some confusion as she continued to comb Dixie's hair. "I had never heard anyone say that."

"Neither do I," Mandy added in the same way. "I didn't think there were boys like that; I thought they were all snooty fools who believe themselves the best when they want to win you over."

"No, Diddy hasn't been that way," Dixie replied with a few small laughs. "Hey, and you girls have or have had a boyfriend?... By any chance, don't you like Ricky or Melvyn?"

"Oh, of course not. They're like our brothers," Jenny replied with a laugh. "We've never thought that of them."

"I once had a boyfriend," Mandy said with some disgust. "But the idiot cheated on me with another stupid girl who didn't even comb her hair... Ah, but that didn't stay that way, I went to her and left her more disheveled than she already was."

"I had a boyfriend too, but he was a stupid guy who only thought about himself," Jenny added with a shrug. "He was a snooty clown and coward after all."

"Wow, you've had some disappointments," Dixie said. "Maybe the next time you can do better if you coincide with someone."

"But that's the way they are; what can be done with them," Jenny replied with a shrug. "By the way, Dixie, and there are more cute boys in your school?" she asked mischievously, elbowing her softly.

"Well, it depends on how you like them, but most of them are unkind," Dixie replied with a shrug. "Not to mention those four thugs who are complete oafs."

"Wow, I see your classmates weren't nice at all," Mandy said as she played with Dixie's hair.

"Hey, girls, how about now we try to comb our hair by ourselves?" Jenny later suggested.

The girls continued with their hair tricks until later. Dixie taught them both several of those, while they also did, although to a lesser extent. It had been a while since Dixie had been able to get together with other girls to talk and share feminine things, and she was happy to have met them.

Both groups stayed up late meeting. Both Diddy and Dixie felt so comfortable having some company time with new friends. Later, the six of them got back together, where they played competitive games outside the house. Without a doubt, Diddy and Dixie were feeling pretty good now.

And so more days passed... Now Diddy and Dixie already had new friends their age to play, hang out and have fun. They had become very good friends with the four of them; they felt that they became like the schoolmates they didn't have and would have liked to have in school. Those children had behaved very well with both of them and became well closed with them.

Diddy and Dixie, apart from their dates between the two of them, now also went for frequent walks with their new friends; the places where they went were even more fun in their company. Even

though these children were a little fearful of extreme activities, Diddy and Dixie tried to understand them and opt for other ways of fun. The only thing they could not do in a group was to get into the sea, rivers and lakes because of the allergies that those children claimed to have.

Among other things they used to do, was to perform group games that before Diddy and Dixie could not do on that island because they required more than two participants. Other times, they played at being explorers, pirates, heroes or any other story they invented. Diddy and Dixie hadn't played like this for a long time when they were on DK Island with Kiddy and Tiny, and sometimes with Chunky.

The four kong children were also very happy to have found good friends like Diddy and Dixie to accompany them and accept them as they are; that was something that also made the young kong couple very happy.

On the times when it rained, those kong children didn't like to go out, so Diddy and Dixie just stayed at home with them, where they just chatted and told stories. Diddy and Dixie told their new friends about their little journeys on DK Island, as well as many anecdotes from school or with their families and friends there. Likewise, the four kids told them stories of when they were little or of their journeys through different islands. Sometimes, they also had meetings of only boys and only girls, where they shared secrets and tastes in greater confidence and, of course, Diddy and Dixie used to talk about how well the two of them were doing as a couple.

Mr. Pinky, on the other hand, was also very happy for the two of them, because at least they had made new friends on that island so that they distracted their minds much more, while they waited for their return to DK Island. After all, with new friends, Diddy and Dixie's days on that island could be more and more entertaining.

Chapter 39: In the Wee Hours

It was the wee hours of the morning and, of course, everyone would be sleeping soundly after a long day.

Dixie was sleeping in her hammock... Until at one point, she woke up suddenly as usually happens at some random time in the early morning. She settled back down to sleep... Not before hearing the door open, at the same time that footsteps resounded. Dixie turned and got up immediately to see what happened. Diddy was not present, so she assumed that he had gone outside the house for a while.

"Diddy?" Dixie called him as she walked out of the room; it was rare that Diddy wanted to go out at that time. "Diddy!"

Dixie looked everywhere and looked down the stairs to look for Diddy, but to her surprise, there was no sign of anyone. She didn't take importance at first, so she decided to re-enter the house to sleep.

Suddenly, Dixie was starting to have a bad feeling about it all. And from one moment to another, several footsteps were heard nearby. She knew something wasn't right and out of nowhere she began to tremble with fear and went back to inspect outside.

"Hi, Dixie," said a known voice that had not been heard for a while... and that Dixie didn't expect to hear at all. "How long without seeing each other... *baby*."

Dixie turned to look at him instantly and felt a turn in her stomach, while every part of her was trembling when she clearly realized *who* was a few meters away from her. She was paralyzed with fear, unable to move.

"J-Jem-Jemky?!" she stuttered with difficulty speaking. "W-what are you doing here?!"

"Oh, I was just looking for you everywhere and finally I found you, sweetie," replied the orangutan boy walking towards her while smiling at her. "Don't be afraid, nothing bad will happen, pretty."

"*D-DIDDY! MR. PINKY!*" Dixie shouted in terror as she ran into the room instinctively and closed the door immediately, then secured it so he wouldn't come in.

Dixie was in a state of panic as she called Diddy and Mr. Pinky in extreme desperation, knowing that seeing again with the group of school bullies would be certain revenge. It was never expected that on an island so far away they would find those bad children; it was the last thing she wanted to happen.

Suddenly, Jemky had knocked down the door in one fell swoop and headed back towards Dixie.

"*Get out of here!*" Dixie exclaimed as she threw to him any object at her hand. "*Diddy, where are you?!*"

"Oh, why are you looking for Diddy?" Jemky asked, dodging Dixie's attacks and sneering. "Is he already your boyfriend?"

"Yes! Does it hurt you?!" Dixie replied firmly.

"If it hurts me?" Jemky exclaimed before laughing. "Well, I would say yes, but... look there!" he added before pointing to the back of the room.

Dixie looked where he had pointed and, to her bad surprise, there were Mandrew, Melenky and Rocky surrounding Diddy, who was wrapped with ropes from his arms and legs and with vines covering his mouth.

"No! Let him go!" ordered Dixie as she ran towards him. "*Let him-*"

"Hey! Where do you think you're going?!" exclaimed Jemky, pulling out two guns and pointing it at Dixie before she could run to free Diddy.

Dixie froze, with all the fear engulfing her as she had Jemky in front of her in position with two guns in hand. Jemky then pointed one of the guns at Diddy, who also showed a terrified face and unable to speak or scream.

"And don't try to fight back this time, Dixie," Jemky ordered seriously. Then, he opened his vest a little and showed a wound in his chest, the product of the shot he had received from Dixie. "You're going to pay me for this!"

"Jemky, I s-swear it wasn't my intention to shoot you. I won't try to attack you this time, but please don't hurt us!" Dixie pleaded in despair and anguish as every part of her being trembled.

"Oh, calm down, pretty, I won't hurt you," Jemky said calmly as he approached her. "We're just going to get rid of that dumb monkey."

"*Don't even dream about it!*" Dixie replied.

"Well, that's right, pretty Dixie," Jemky said, hugging her. But a few seconds later, he let go and pushed her sharply. "*Bah! We'll kill you both anyway!*"

Jemky immediately opened fire and shot mercilessly at Diddy, then pointed at Dixie and shot her as well.

"*NOOO!*" Dixie shouted as hard as she could and her eyes closed.

"Dixie?!" Diddy's voice was heard.

Suddenly, Dixie felt a blow all over her body, opened her eyes, and realized that she was on the ground under her hammock. She looked up and saw Diddy watching her strangely, sitting on his hammock. Dixie was still trembling with fear; her heart was still racing and she felt the circulation to her feet. Then, she looked around trying to regain her senses.

"What's wrong, Dixie?" asked Diddy worriedly as he headed to help her up. "You fell and now look very scared."

Dixie was still silent as they both sat in her hammock. She looked at Diddy, and was relieved to see him well. Apparently, she had only had a bad dream because of the fears she had about the group of school bullies.

"N-nothing, Diddy," Dixie replied tremblingly. "It's just... I had a nightmare... very ugly."

"Really? What happened?" Diddy asked curiously.

"I was dreaming that here were... Jemky and company. Mandrew, Melenky and Rocky had you tied up, while Jemky was pointing at us to shoot. H-he showed me his wound from the shot I gave him and he wanted revenge, and then... he shot both of us.

"Oh no, that's really a nightmare," Diddy said, trying to calm Dixie and placing his hands on her shoulders. "Don't worry, it was just a dream, it's over. There are none of those fools around here, they don't even have to imagine where we are... The good thing about being here is that we are safe and away from those evil bullies."

Diddy hugged Dixie, as she continued to tremble with fear and try to regain her sense of reality.

"Diddy..." Dixie said after a while. "When we return to DK Island... what will we do if we meet those four thugs again?"

Diddy was silent for a moment; that question was also asked by himself every time he thought about returning to DK Island: could it be that the bully children would want to take revenge on them for what Dixie did to Jemky?

"I don't know either, Dixie... I'm afraid of it too, you know?" Diddy replied with complete sincerity. "But we could keep a low profile when we are near DK Island, then we'll ask others to help us face them or to protect us... And this time I'm going to report them and then tell Wrinkly to kick them out and talk to their parents or something... I hope everything goes well."

"I don't want to have a runaway life again," Dixie commented worriedly.

"That won't happen, Dixie, don't worry. I'm sure that together at DK Island we'll be able to join forces. But for now, we'll just have to wait... We'll be fine for now."

"I hope so, Diddy."

Dixie was still very worried about what might happen when they returned to DK Island. On the one hand, she did want to return home, but on the other, she didn't know if they would be at risk; that was something that both of them were concerned about as well.

"How will everyone be on DK Island?" Dixie asked herself after a while and with a tone of concern.

"I just hope they haven't become desperate for us," Diddy added in the same tone. "But anyway... we can't know now. We just have to wait for the day when we return."

Diddy stayed with her for a while longer to keep her company and hug her until she fully recovered. Later, both went back to sleep each in their hammock. Sometimes, the early mornings where they woke up at random times used to be the lowest moments of their days on Hurricane Island, as it was where thoughts and uncertainties about returning to DK Island invaded their minds. Likewise, they were the hours where they remembered most of their respective relatives of DK Island.

Chapter 40: A Proposal

It had been three weeks since Dixie and Diddy met their new friends, and they had done pretty well with them. All of them had been very friendly with the two of them and, in the same way, Diddy and Dixie hoped that this friendship would continue to grow and they could get to know them much more, since they spent hours of fun with those new children. His days on Hurricane Island hadn't been so bad after all.

Diddy and Dixie were again heading to their new friends' house. Arriving there, the four of them were outside the house this time, in fact, they were all lined up on their sides as if they were waiting for Diddy and Dixie and could tell them something important.

"How are you, friends!" Diddy greeted them with joy, and they returned the greeting.

"Are you ready for another adventure?" Dixie added in the same way.

"Of course we are!" the four replied looking excited.

"Today we were planning to go to the hillside we saw yesterday," Dixie told them. "We can make fun games there."

"Sounds great!" Jenny replied along with the group.

"We have a new game to show you too," Melvyn said, jumping with excitement.

"Well, what are we waiting for?" Ricky said. "Let's go right now."

Diddy and Dixie started walking with their group of friends, happy to spend another day with them. When suddenly, they both noticed that the four kids were slowing down their steps while they seemed to whisper and beckon to each other, so they turned to look at them.

"What's going on?" Dixie asked them, smiling and looking at them strangely at the same time.

The kong children kept waving or nudging each other as they pointed at Diddy and Dixie.

"Well, friends, it's that..." Jenny said with a smile. "We have a proposal for you."

"Proposal?" Diddy asked. "About what?"

Suddenly, the four of them were looking at each other in smiling ways as if they were about to want to tell them some good news.

"You see, we know that you want and need to return to your island," Ricky said before pausing, "and well... I think *we can help you.*"

"But we need your help too," Mandy added before giving them an important detail. "And so maybe you can return to your DK Island *in a few days.*"

Diddy and Dixie got an extremely strange look instantly upon hearing that, and thought that their friends just wanted to explain a game to them.

"Really?" Dixie asked them, looking at them strangely and crossing her arms. "And... how?"

"Do you remember that we mentioned to you that we knew DK Island?" Jenny reminded them, to which Diddy and Dixie nodded. "We know a route where the hurricane does not pass," she added, whispering.

"Really?!" exclaimed the two, instantly astonished.

Diddy and Dixie looked at them confused at what they were saying. At first, they were as if they didn't believe them, since there would be nothing they could do to return to DK Island for the time being, but at the same time, they were curious to know what they were planning, since their new friends always came out with some occurrence.

"But, how are you supposed to help us?" Diddy questioned in disbelief as emitting a few small laughs. "Are you serious?"

"Well, we were thinking about building a *ship* ," Mandy told them. "But a large and very resistant one, that can withstand storms. And we wanted to know if... you want to join too."

"Yeah, and then we can take you to your island," Ricky added, smiling at them. "And if we rush, it could be ready in a couple of weeks or less. You'll be on your island in less time than expected!"

Diddy and Dixie kept looking at them strangely for what they were saying; for a while they thought that the four of them were just talking as a game or just wanted to play a joke on them. Although if it was true, they no longer wanted to have any illusions of trying to return to DK Island before the hurricane storm passed, since they had already resigned themselves to staying on Hurricane Island. However, they still had doubts about what their four friends were telling them.

"Wait, wait," Dixie interrupted, still in disbelief. "But are you sure you know well that '*safe route*' that can lead us to DK Island? I've not heard anyone here who knows anything like that."

"Oh, come on!" Mandy said with a shrug. "You're talking to a quartet of kids who have spent almost their entire lives exploring islands. We've been through that route whenever it's hurricane season."

"And do you know how to build a... *big ship*?" Diddy asked them, still not quite believing them and crossing his arms.

"Of course we do," Ricky told them. "How do you think we have moved from island to island? We have learned to build everything from rafts to ships. We can teach you too."

"Wow... You hadn't told us you knew how to make ships," Dixie said, smiling at them with some strangeness.

Diddy and Dixie questioned it for a while, but then thought it might not be a bad idea to try... Although for the most part, they still thought that their friends were just proposing it to them as if it were one of the many games they have already made with them.

"Okay, but... there's just one problem," Diddy said. "What would Mr. Pinky say? Remember that we had promised him not to try to cross the sea again in these times."

"Don't worry, if you want, don't tell him yet," Jenny replied.

"Or are you just inviting us to play at being sailors?" Dixie asked them with a little laugh.

"No, no, we really tell you," Ricky reaffirmed. "Seriously, we want to build a boat with you and we'll help you."

"This has to be just a game," Diddy added in the same way as Dixie. "We can't go to DK Island just like that."

"Hey, no," Jenny replied. "This is serious, we're going to build a real boat. And by the way, we won't necessarily build it from scratch; we can use those pieces of boats that are on the beaches of this island."

Diddy and Dixie thought about it for a while longer. Would it be safe to accept such a proposal from *kids*? What if things didn't go well again as they hoped?... Or if they better try one more time? Maybe it would just be a game, after all.

"Wait a minute, please," Diddy said as he elbowed Dixie lightly and made signs at her.

Then, Diddy went with Dixie to a corner to talk privately and see what she thought about that proposal they made to them.

"Do you think they're serious?" Diddy whispered to Dixie with a few small laughs and disbelief at the same time.

"I don't know, but I think it sounds interesting what they're saying," Dixie replied with a shrug. "What if we just accept their proposal? They may just want to play."

"But what about Mr. Pinky?"

"We can tell him later anyway. Apart... I don't think we'll finish a huge ship in just *two weeks* as they say; maybe we finish it just when the hurricanes are also over," she whispered in the last sentence.

"Well, so... will we go back to them and tell them?"

Diddy and Dixie returned to the four kids to tell them if they would accept the proposal. The quartet was hopeful that they would be given an affirmative answer.

"Okay, friends... We agree," Dixie announced, smiling.

The four kong children looked at each other again, and then looked at Diddy and Dixie. They showed faces of joy in addition to taking small jumps of excitement.

"*Yeah!*" exclaimed the four excitedly.

"It'll be a great adventure and we'll have a lot of fun; you'll see," Melvyn said with excitement.

"By the way... why do you want to do this?" Diddy asked them, still somewhat confused.

"Oh... it's that, well... we just wanted to do something nice for you," Jenny replied, smiling more calmly. "You've been very good to us all this time we've known you."

"Yeah, only you have accepted us as we are," Mandy added with a little shyness. "You're one of the few who don't make us feel discriminated against."

"And we think this is a great way to return the favor to you," Ricky continued in the same way. "We haven't known you for long, but... I think we haven't ever had friends as kind and great as you."

Diddy and Dixie looked at each other and were moved by those answers and, at the same time, made them feel very good, even though they kept thinking that the ship would be just a game.

"Oh, you didn't have to worry," Dixie replied, smiling at them. "You know you can count on us whenever you want."

"And for whatever," Diddy added likewise. "We'll be with you for anything; that's what friends are for."

"But we want to help you anyway," Ricky said, still smiling at them. "You deserve it."

Diddy and Dixie were happy, not only to have made new friends, but also that they had given smiles to a quartet of homeless children.

"Well, how about now we play 'frozen monkey' and then go to the hillside?" Jenny suggested excitedly, to which the rest joined.

The group of now six kong children began to run as a game; as expected, everyone was playing another of their favorite games.

Diddy and Dixie weren't entirely sure about being able to build a huge ship in just weeks, but still, they thought it wouldn't be bad to try just for fun and sharing more moments with their new friends.

At another time, Dixie was reunited with Jenny and Mandy and, likewise, Diddy with Ricky and Melvyn. It was also very common for only boys and only girls to hang around together.

Suddenly, Diddy was thinking about something he had planned for a few days, and he was just with his two friends whom he wanted to ask something about it.

"Hey, friends," Diddy said quietly to the two boys. "I need a little help."

"Yeah? What do you need, Diddy?" Ricky asked along with Melvyn.

"It's that... I want to give Dixie a gift, but I still don't know what it could be."

Ricky and Melvyn looked at each other for a few seconds and looked confused, as if they didn't know what to answer Diddy.

"A gift, you said? And... what do you plan to give her?" Ricky asked, his hands at his sides.

"I don't know yet, that's why I'm asking you if you have any suggestions," Diddy replied, putting his fingers together and smiling. "In fact, I have something specific to give her; I was thinking about an emerald. But I need more things to add, you know... those gifts with details. You said that you have had a girlfriend, didn't you give them some kind of gift like that?"

Ricky and Melvyn were pensive for a moment, as if they were also undecided, since apparently, they didn't know much about gifts for couples either.

"Well... The truth is that I never gave anything to my ex-girlfriend," Ricky replied with a shrug. "As I told you: we barely lasted a few weeks and she even had me as a choice."

"Neither do I," Melvyn added in the same way. "I didn't even have time to give her a gift because then she cheated on me."

"Oh, so... you have no idea how to make those kinds of gifts, do you?" Diddy asked them.

"But we could help you anyway, buddy," Ricky replied, smiling. "You see, with the emerald, maybe we can help you get it. But for those details you say, ask the girls that; they know more about those *couple gifts*."

"Right, we know an underground cave that has many precious stones," Melvyn added. "It's right here on this island. If you want, we can go later or tomorrow."

"Really? That sounds good," Diddy replied with a smile. "Okay, friends. So how about we go this afternoon, almost at night? What do you think?"

"Yes, at that time it's fine," Melvyn replied.

"No problem. So, we'll see you later," Ricky replied with the same smile. "We'll meet here at our house, okay?"

"Okay," Diddy said, smiling. "I really thank you."

"It's nothing, Diddy," Ricky replied, patting him on the shoulder. "This is what friends are for."

The three then continued on their way in the small group, and then reunited with the girls later.

The rest of the day, all of them spent playing as usual and stayed until mid-afternoon. Diddy knew that he would have to be home before the night and then go with the boys to get the emerald for Dixie; since it was a surprise, she wouldn't have to find out yet...

Chapter 41: That's What Friends Are For

In the late sunset hours, Diddy and Dixie were in their room. Dixie was sitting in her hammock while brushing her hair and, on the other hand, there was Diddy reading some comic magazines that Mr. Pinky had lent them.

Later, Diddy realized that the sun was setting and the time when he had to go to the caves with Ricky and Melvyn was approaching. He would have to tell Dixie that he would go out with them without sounding very obvious that he was planning a surprise for her.

"Hey, Dixie," Diddy called her, getting up and heading toward her. "Well... it's just now I'll go out with Ricky and Melvyn to explore some caves. Can you tell Mr. Pinky that I'll come back a little later?"

"Okay, Diddy," Dixie replied as she continued to brush her hair. "Are the three of you going for a walk?"

"Yes, you know, another 'boys only' outing."

"Okay," Dixie said, smiling. But suddenly, she showed herself with a worried face as if she had something to say. "Uhh... hey, Diddy, but... don't take so long, please. It's just... I'm still afraid."

"About nightmares?" Diddy asked, to which Dixie nodded with the same fearful look as the night before. "No, you keep calm, Dix. It's impossible for those school fools to know where we are; remember we got here in a storm. There is no danger for now."

Diddy stayed for a moment thinking about what Dixie said. He wanted to tell her that he was preparing a surprise gift to cheer her up, but at the same time, he couldn't because it was a surprise. Instead, he just sat next to her and hugged her for a while, so she would feel less worried.

"We'll be fine, Dix. Just think about how happy we're also going to be when we return to DK Island, okay?" Diddy said before giving her a kiss on the cheek and smiling to give her more security. "Now, I have to go. See you later, Dixie."

"See you later, Diddy," Dixie replied, smiling a little. "Have fun."

Diddy left the house, but not before turning to look at Dixie again and saying goodbye once again in the distance. Then, he came down from the house and went to meet his new friends. The reason why he wanted to give an emerald to Dixie was as a gesture of returning the emerald that she had given him, since that stone had been stolen by the group of evil children from the school and who knows now where they would have it or what they would have done with it.

Diddy walked for a while, and arrived at the house of his new friends. There were the four of them at home, but only Ricky and Melvyn got out, since it was a mission only for boys as they had agreed.

"How are you, Diddy?" the two boys said cheerfully as they came down from their house. "Are you ready to go?"

"Of course," Diddy replied in kind. "Well, are we leaving right now?"

The three of them started on their way and headed towards the cave that the two kong children had mentioned. It was already getting dark, so they took some torches with them.

They walked for only a quarter of an hour; that cave wasn't that far away after all. Until later, they arrived and entered. It was an underground cave, so they had to go down carefully not to slip. The cave was not that big, but it had several corners filled with gemstones of various kinds that emitted bright flashes. It seemed to be a perfect place to look for any stone quickly.

"The emeralds are over there. Come this way," Ricky pointed toward one direction in the cave.

The three of them kept walking until they came to where the emeralds were and began to inspect them. Diddy wanted to find one that was as close as possible to the one Dixie had given him: that emerald was a bright and dark green color. But most of the emeralds that were there, were very clear and didn't shine as much.

"Are you looking for a specific kind, Diddy?" Ricky asked him as he looked at each of the emeralds.

"Well... one kind that is a dark green color," Diddy replied as he examined one in his hands.

"Hmm, do you mean a deep green emerald?" Melvyn asked curiously.

"Yeah, that kind!"

"Ohh, those are super hard to find, you know?" Ricky commented. "And I don't think there are any here."

"Oh, I need one of those," Diddy said with some frustration. "Dixie gave me one but it already got lost and I wanted to return it to her. Those bad kids from school stole it."

"But you can take any of the ones here too," Melvyn said, cheering him up along with Ricky. "I'm sure she'll like it anyway."

"This one is not bad, for example," Ricky added, showing him an emerald from the cave, although Diddy was not entirely convinced.

The three stayed longer looking for a similar emerald, but could not find it. So, Diddy had no choice and had to take one of the common emeralds that were there. He took one that wasn't that deep green, but it was the darkest shade in that cave.

Later, the three of them left the cave and headed back to the house of the four. Diddy still had to prepare Dixie's gift and, as Melvyn and Ricky had mentioned to him, the girls could help him with that. He just hoped it wouldn't take too long, since he didn't want to leave Dixie alone after she had those nightmares the night before.

Diddy, along with Melvyn and Ricky, arrived at their house, but the two boys had to leave because they said they had to look for food for the next day, so Diddy was the only one who went up to their house. When he opened the door, Jenny and Mandy came out to meet him and greet him.

"Hi, Diddy, how are you?!" the girls said with joy.

"Hi, girls," Diddy replied in kind.

"What brought you here?" Jenny asked, smiling.

"Well, I wanted to ask you something," Diddy replied.

"Ahh, what gift could you give Dixie about?" Mandy asked.

"Yes, how do you know?"

"Melvyn and Ricky told us you were planning to give Dixie a surprise gift," Jenny replied before taking his arm. "Come, we'll help you."

Diddy entered the house and followed his friends. Looking around, he was surprised when in almost the entire room there were a lot of flowers of different species and, on the other hand, there were some jars full of candies... Diddy was somewhat confused at that, as he didn't expect it.

"Oh, by the way, Diddy," Jenny said as she took some of the flowers and showed them to Diddy. "This afternoon we were collecting all these flowers so you can see which ones Dixie may like."

"And besides, we brought these sweets too," Mandy added, showing him one of the jars. "There are chewing gums as Dixie likes."

"Oh... great," Diddy replied, smiling, still confused at the scene. "And... where did you get these sweets?"

"We made them," Mandy replied, smiling. "Yes, we know how to make them."

"And so, we were thinking that you could give Dixie a box," Jenny suggested excitedly. "You know, those that carry flowers, candies, and of course: love notes. Girls love those details."

"Okay. But... how would I hide such a gift so that Dixie doesn't find out yet?" Diddy asked.

"Don't worry," replied Mandy. "If you want, we can have it here and then you'll come to pick it up again when you want to deliver it to her."

"Okay, girls. I really thank you," Diddy said, smiling again. "Hey, and I got an idea: how about if the six of us go to the animal shelter tomorrow? You two will distract Dixie while I'll return here with Ricky and Melvyn to pick the gift up, and then give it to Dixie."

"I think it's a good plan!" Jenny said with emotion. "I'm sure Dixie will like it a lot."

"Hey, Diddy, but... what is that shelter like?" Mandy asked, looking a little fearful.

"Don't worry, all the animals there are good," Diddy told them. "And as we told you, some are even our friends."

"Well, so, there is no need to fear," Jenny replied with a shrug. "So, how about we start?"

The two kong girls began to help Diddy assemble the surprise gift for Dixie. Diddy was a novice to that kind of thing, so it didn't be bad to get help from the girls. Had he been under normal circumstances, Diddy was sure that his best friend who could help him in that type of gifts would be Donkey; he remembered how he was with Candy about gifts, but Donkey wasn't around at that time.

The three of them were assembling a box that could be detached by removing the lid. Inside it, Diddy made small, quick drawings about Dixie and himself. Then, they filled the box with various flowers and some candies, mostly chewing gum, as these were Dixie's favorite candies. And of course, the emerald could not be missing. Finally, they put some decorative details with branches and colored leaves.

"It's almost finished, and it's looking really cute," Mandy said as they finished assembling the box.

"I hope Dixie likes it," Diddy said, imagining Dixie's joyful reaction.

"Of course, she'll like it," Jenny added. "And much more if it's a gift from you, Diddy."

The three kids finished giving some last details to the gift box, which increased the excitement in Diddy to know how Dixie would get... Although minutes later, he remembered her situation.

"Hey, I think I have to leave," Diddy said, looking up at the sky through the window. "It's getting late."

"Only the letters left, Diddy, aren't you going to put them on it?" Jenny asked.

"I'll write those later and bring them tomorrow," Diddy replied, getting up. "It's that Dixie was feeling a little scared because of some nightmares she had, and I don't want to leave her like that until very late."

"Oh, you're so good to her," Mandy said with a tone of tenderness. "You guys are so adorable together."

"Yeah, you're both a cute little couple," Jenny added in the same tone. "You're our favorite couple!"

"Oh, thank you, girls," Diddy replied, blushing a little. "You don't know how long I waited for her."

Jenny and Mandy made gestures of tenderness upon hearing Diddy talk about Dixie. Then the door was knocked as familiar voices could be heard outside.

"Oh, Melvyn and Ricky have arrived," Mandy said, standing up.

Mandy headed to open the door and help the two boys with what they had brought, while Jenny continued to help Diddy finish assembling the box and collecting the remains.

"I really appreciate everything, you're good friends," Diddy told her as he settled the box.

"It's nothing, Diddy. That's what we're here for," Jenny replied kindly while smiling at him. "Wow... how lucky Dixie must be to have a boyfriend like you."

"Of course," Diddy said, smiling. "And I feel lucky to have her, too."

Diddy then walked to the door and met Melvyn and Ricky again, and explained the plan to go to the animal shelter, which would take place the next day.

"I really thank you, friends, seriously," Diddy said, smiling at the four of them before leaving. "Don't forget, we'll see you tomorrow."

"Okay, buddy. That's what we're here for," Ricky replied, patting him on the shoulder. "And count on us for tomorrow."

"See you later, Diddy!" the four of them told them.

"See you later!" Diddy replied.

Diddy finished saying goodbye to them and finally left for Mr. Pinky's house. He was happy that he would finally have a gift ready for Dixie, and he just hoped to see her smile the moment she received it... although he also hoped that Dixie would be fine at that very moment due to the nightmares she had had the night before, so he quickened his steps to get home.

In their respective room, Dixie was sleeping in her hammock in comfort. When suddenly, she heard someone knocking on the door and suddenly woke up. She guessed it was Diddy, so she got up to open it to meet him.

"Hi, Diddy, it's good that you've arrived-"

"Which Diddy?! It's me, pretty!" Jemky appeared abruptly entering the house.

Instantly, Dixie's pulse raced and she screamed loudly as she ran into the house, and then began throwing any object at Jemky as he chased after her. She decided to escape from there and tried to get out the window, but not before being stopped by Jemky, who also carried a gun and pointed it at her.

"Not so fast, Dixie! Still or I'll shoot!" Jemky ordered, grabbing her arm and pointing at her. "Now you and the monkey are going to pay me for trying to kill me!"

Jemky, without further thought, proceeded to shoot Dixie, to which she screamed in terror.

"Dixie!"

Dixie opened her eyes instantly upon hearing Diddy's voice, who was right where she had seen Jemky a few seconds ago in another of her nightmares. Dixie realized that she had only dreamed again and was again lying in the hammock, still shaky and nervous.

"Oh, Dixie, don't tell me again" Diddy asked, approaching Dixie worriedly.

"Yes..." Dixie replied, getting up and still trembling. "I slept for a while so I wouldn't think about it, but... I dreamed about it."

"Don't worry, nothing happened. Everything is fine," Diddy said, hugging her to calm her down.

"Oh, Diddy... I'm really afraid," Dixie exclaimed, distraught. "What if those fools plan to hurt us as soon as we meet again?"

"Oh, no, no, Dixie," Diddy exclaimed, trying to reassure her. "We don't know anything about them now, but we'll be more careful when we return to DK Island, even this time *we'll* report them and seek help from others to have more support."

Dixie stood pensively and with a lowered look. Then, Diddy stared straight at her as he remembered something he might say to Dixie to try to calm her down.

"Do you know anything?" Diddy said. "If you still feel scared, you can try to reimagine that same dream, but this time changing the ending. That's what Donkey taught me when I had nightmares too," he added, smiling, before getting serious again when Dixie still hadn't recovered her spirits. "Uh... Well, I know, that won't solve anything, but... at least it can keep you calm in the meantime," Diddy finished, smiling back a little.

"Are you... sure?" Dixie asked again, looking at him.

"I used to do it when I had nightmares about those fools too... And yes, I know, that didn't solve anything, but at least it calmed me down enough to survive every night.

"Really?" Dixie asked again, still not so sure.

"Yes, of course. Even... after that, try to think of ten things that make you happy; that will end up helping you a lot... Or at least it reassured me."

Dixie was only pensive for a moment, before Diddy gave her another smile to try to reassure her.

"Well... I could try it the next time I go to sleep," Dixie replied, smiling a little, but still being somewhat fearful.

"Try to do it and tell me how it went, okay?" Diddy said, patting her on the shoulder and smiling at her, to which Dixie smiled as well.

"Hey, Diddy, right... and how did your hang out go?" Dixie asked him after a while.

"We were great; we explored that underground cave I told you," Diddy replied thinking about the gift for Dixie, but at the same time, reserving from wanting to tell her.

Suddenly, someone came through the door, which was semi-closed. At first, Dixie was very frightened, but calmed down seeing who it was.

"What's going on here?!" Mr. Pinky asked them, showing concern. "I thought I heard Miss Dixie screaming."

"Nothing happened, Mr. Pinky," Dixie replied with a forced smile. "It's just that... I had a nightmare about... Oh, yes, about *hurricanes*."

"Oh, no, don't worry, guys, hurricanes don't come this far," the teacher replied with a little laughter. "And well, are you okay yet, Miss Dixie?"

"Y-yes, yes, of course," Dixie replied, trying to keep herself smiling. "Only at the end of my dream the hurricane swallowed us, that's why I think it was that I screamed. But it's past."

"Oh, all right," the teacher replied with a calm smile. "And well, I wanted to tell you that the special dinner of the week is ready for you to go up."

Mr. Pinky left the room, while Diddy and Dixie stayed for a few more minutes until Dixie could completely calm down. Diddy really wanted to tell Dixie that he had a gift to cheer her up a bit, but he shouldn't do it just yet or he would ruin the surprise.

"Oh, right, Dixie," Diddy said as he headed with Dixie to dinner, "I had told our friends to all go to the animal shelter tomorrow, what do you think?"

"Great! Will we introduce them to our friends over there?"

"Of course, and then..." Diddy wanted to mention the surprise gift, but at the same time he couldn't. "Ahh, yes, then we can go somewhere else," he finished with a smile, before continuing to walk towards the stairs.

Chapter 42: Surprise Gift

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The next day, as they had planned, Diddy and Dixie would go to the animal shelter along with their new friends and, of course, Diddy would give the surprise gift to Dixie.

Diddy and Dixie headed to the house of their four new friends, and after that, the six were on their way to the shelter.

After a long journey, they finally arrived. The four of them were a little shy about meeting the animals there, but Diddy and Dixie told them that they were all very friendly.

"Are there too many animals here?" Melvyn asked, arm in arm with the group.

"That's right," Dixie replied. "But don't worry, they are good animals, they'll receive you very well."

They were all at the entrances of the shelter, when suddenly, one of the apes who owned that place came out and found them.

"Hey! How are you, little monkeys Diddy and Dixie?" the ape said, greeting them, and then noticed the other four children. "Oh, hello, are you new here at the shelter?"

"No, they're our new friends," Diddy replied. "They are Melvyn, Jenny, Ricky and Mandy," he added, pointing to each one.

"We were just coming to visit so you could get to know them," Dixie added.

"Oh, that's good. So, be welcome, new children, nice to meet you," replied the ape, shaking hands with each one, receiving a shy greeting from the four of them. "Well, what are you waiting for? You can pass."

The six of them passed inside the shelter. There were several of the animals hanging around the shelter and doing different activities. The four new kong children were watching the whole place carefully and that seemed to catch their attention.

"Wow! This place is amazing," Mandy said as she looked everywhere.

"It's super spacious," Melvyn added in the same way. "I think we would have come here at the beginning."

"Are they all the animals you rescued from the zoo?" Jenny asked Diddy and Dixie, pointing to all animals in general.

"They are some of them; others were already here when we arrived," Dixie replied.

Suddenly, a group of animals that were from the circus, known to Diddy and Dixie, were passing by them and greeted them.

"Diddy! Dixie! Good to see you here, how are you?" a zebra said, greeting them with joy, and then noticed the group of new children. "Oh, and who are they?"

"They're our new friends: Ricky, Mandy, Jenny and Melvyn," Dixie said, introducing them.

"Hi!" the four children greeted with some shyness.

"Wow, you made new friends on this island," commented a rhinoceros before greeting each one. "Nice to meet you, new children. Welcome."

The four greeted each of the animals; although they were somewhat shy, they were already feeling more comfortable in that place and, of course, Diddy and Dixie were there to accompany them.

"By the way, friends, the apes who owned this shelter made a banana cake," the zebra told them. "You can go eat some if you want. Oh, your new friends can eat too."

"Banana cake? That's great!" Diddy exclaimed before talking to the four of them. "What do you say, friends? Do you want to?"

"Uhh... No, thanks," Jenny replied apologetically. "We don't want to eat anything for now."

"Really? Not even a banana cake?" Dixie added, trying to cheer them up.

"No, no, it's that... we ate recently and we are full," Ricky added. "And we don't like cakes, thank you."

Diddy and Dixie looked at them again with weirdness, but they were already getting used to it when their new friends didn't want to do or say something wasn't to their liking.

"Okay, so, let's get to know the others," Diddy said.

The six kongs continued to tour the shelter. Diddy and Dixie were telling their four new friends about the place, and every minute they were introduced to animals known to the two of them, either from the zoo or the circus, and thus introduced their new friends. Those four children were gradually coming into trust with the rest of the animals and, likewise, the latter were happy to meet them.

They spent all the time introducing their new friends to all the other animals, and on one occasion or another, they offered them some food even though the four kong children never ate, which earned a few strange looks from Diddy and Dixie. On other occasions, some animals stayed talking for long periods with the six kids; it was also new that Diddy and Dixie had made new friends within that island.

Later, Diddy remembered that he had something to do, so he decided to let his friends know.

"Hey, girls!" Diddy whispered to Jenny and Mandy. "It's time; distract Dixie."

"Okay, Diddy," Jenny replied quietly.

Diddy, trying not to let Dixie notice, joined Melvyn and Ricky to go to their house to see Dixie's gift. With so many animals there, Dixie wouldn't easily realize that Diddy would be gone for a moment.

Diddy along with Melvyn and Ricky were leaving the shelter, when suddenly, just at the entrance appeared one of the gorillas that were from the circus; apparently, he had just arrived and greeted Diddy happily as well as the others.

"Diddy! How is it going? Long time no see you," said the gorilla, shaking his hand, before also looking at Melvyn and Ricky.

"Hi, how long," Diddy replied in kind, before introducing him to his new friends as well. "Oh, yes, they're our new friends, over there there's also Dixie with other new friends... Huh? What's up?"

Diddy was confused when suddenly, that gorilla had completely changed his face... Suddenly, he was static as if he had seen a ghost while it was looking specifically... to *Ricky*.

"I-I can't... believe it," the gorilla said with a stutter as he made his way toward Ricky.

The three kids were too confused, and at the same time, Ricky seemed to be getting uncomfortable at the gorilla's strange reaction to him.

"*My son!*" exclaimed the gorilla when suddenly, he took Ricky in his arms and embraced him in an affectionate and emotional way.

"Say what?!" Ricky replied, showing everything confused.

That gorilla began to shed tears, apparently of happiness, as he hugged Ricky... But Ricky, it seemed, was still confused and didn't know what was going on. Some animals walking near them turned to look at the scene.

"I can't believe it, my son!" said the gorilla while Ricky was still so confused. "*Hey, everyone, I found my son!*"

Several of the animals turned to look at the gorilla. Some approached the scene while muttering in amazement and others with joy. In the crowd, Dixie and the two girls also gathered to watch what was happening in that crowd.

"My child, you don't know how long I waited to see you again and-"

"No, no, no! *Wait a minute, sir!*" Ricky interrupted, looking scared and trying to break free from the gorilla's arms. "I think you have been confused, but I don't know you."

"What are you saying? I'm your father!" the gorilla said, pointing to himself. "Look at you, you've grown up since the last time I saw you when I got caught by those circus tamers and-"

"Wait a minute!" Diddy, who was also confused by the event, interrupted. "Are you sure he's your son?"

"Of course he's; he even liked to dress like that with these shirts over one another," the gorilla reaffirmed taking Ricky's blue shirt. "It's my son Tommy!"

"Hey, no, sir! There must be a misunderstanding here," Ricky insisted, letting go of the gorilla completely. "My name is *Ricky*, maybe you confused me with your son you mention."

"Yeah, he's Ricky," Diddy reaffirmed. "He's our new friend; he's never told us he has a father," Diddy added before pointing to the other three. "And they're Melvyn, Mandy and Jenny; they're our

new friends that we met a few weeks ago.”

All the animals present were left confused as they kept muttering about the situation they had just witnessed.

"Oh... So, he wasn't," the gorilla said with a low look before speaking to Ricky again. "Uh, sorry, kid, it's just that... you look a lot like my missing son, who in fact... maybe he's gone. Seriously, it was identical to you... You even have his same voice.”

"Oh, I'm so sorry, sir," Ricky replied in a compassionate tone. "But I'm not your son... I hope one day you'll find him.”

The other animals were also shocked. According to the ape managers of that shelter, such scenes were usually repeated almost daily where some of the animals used to reunite with relatives or friends they had before being captured or disappeared, and sometimes there used to be confusions as well.

Later, everyone dispersed and Diddy, Dixie and their four kong friends were reunited.

"Wow, I thought you were really his son, Ricky," Dixie said.

"Of course not, I swear I had never seen that gorilla," said Ricky, still confused and the other three kids said the same.

"As far as I can remember, we don't know him," Mandy added in the same way. "That was crazy.”

"Hey, and you were going somewhere or what?" Dixie asked the boys curiously.

"Ahh, yes... yes, we were going to go for a walk out there," Diddy replied, trying to disguise along with the other two boys. "And well, we won't be long, okay?”

Diddy, with Melvyn and Ricky, left the shelter. Now they were on their way to see Dixie's surprise gift, although on the way, what they were talking about the most now, was about the scene of confusion with Ricky that they had had when leaving the shelter.

Diddy also stopped by Mr. Pinky's house to pick up some letters he had written for Dixie during the early morning; those would also be in the surprise gift. Then, they continued on their way to the house of the four. Upon arriving there, Diddy finished arranging the gift for Dixie and realized that everything was in order just as he had left it the night before. Later, the three kids returned on their way to the shelter.

At the animal shelter, Dixie was still with Jenny and Mandy. The three of them walked around the place together and talked to the other animals. Later, they saw Ricky and Melvyn enter the shelter, who then headed towards them. Diddy, apparently, hadn't gone in with them yet.

"Hey, Dixie," Melvyn said, walking toward her. "Diddy is waiting for you out there.”

"He has a surprise for you," Ricky whispered.

"A surprise?" Dixie exclaimed in confusion.

"That's right, that's why he went out," Mandy added with a few small laughs, which made Dixie more confused when she saw that the girls also said the same thing.

"Go, what are you waiting for, Dixie?!" Jenny said with excitement.

The four of them hinted to Dixie about the surprise gift, so she headed outside the shelter wondering what it was.

As Dixie came out, she met Diddy, while the four had agreed to stay near the shelter so they could give their two friends privacy.

"What's going on, Diddy?" Dixie asked curiously.

"Uh, it's that... I have something for you," Diddy replied somewhat shyly. "Come on, let's go home for a while."

Dixie was still curious, so she accompanied Diddy, and they both walked towards Mr. Pinky's house. Diddy already wanted to see Dixie's reaction. For a moment, he also remembered the time when he was going to confess his feelings to her on DK Island, although he no longer wanted to remember that bad outcome either. This time, Diddy was calmer and also happy because he knew that now Dixie would reciprocate. Dixie, on the other hand, kept wondering what Diddy's surprise was.

After long minutes of walking, the two arrived under the tree of Mr. Pinky's house. Diddy was already prepared to give the gift to Dixie; it was the first time he did a detail to her and he was excited and nervous at the same time.

"Wait for me here for a moment," Diddy said to Dixie.

Diddy went to the bushes under the tree, for there he had left the gift hidden when he had returned along with his friends. After picking up the gift, he took it to Dixie. When she saw it, she couldn't help but smile instantly and look excited; receiving a surprise gift was something that certainly made her day.

"It's for you, Dix," Diddy said, smiling and handing her the box.

"A gift for me?!" Dixie exclaimed with excitement. "Thank you, Diddy!"

Dixie took the surprise gift and, after that, gave Diddy a kiss on the cheek, which made him blush. Diddy was happy to see Dixie like that.

"Oh, it's so pretty, Diddy!" said Dixie as she opened the box and stared in amazement at everything inside it. "Wow, an emerald! And the drawings! And the flowers... and *chewing gums*... At what moment did you do all this?"

"Well, that's what I went to last night with the boys; we went looking for that emerald. And then the girls also helped me assemble the whole box with those details."

"Oh, so, this was a surprise," Dixie said with a small laugh. "It's very nice of you, Diddy. Thank you, really," she said, smiling excitedly.

"You're welcome, Dix," Diddy replied, smiling back.

"Wow, this emerald is very pretty," Dixie said as she took the emerald. "And it also shines--"

Suddenly, within seconds Dixie was holding the emerald... it broke into some pieces. Both Dixie, and especially Diddy, were shocked by such a sudden event.

"What...?!" Diddy exclaimed in confusion. "Oh, no, but what happened?... I-I swear it wasn't like that all this time, Dixie."

Diddy took the emerald and examined it in detail, apparently, it had broken and he had no idea how it happened. He was quite disappointed since he had tried hard to find it for Dixie and it was the most important detail of that gift.

"Oh, no. I'm really sorry, Dixie," Diddy said with a low look. "Maybe it broke down on the way."

"Oh, don't worry, Diddy... It was just an accident," Dixie replied by putting a hand on his shoulder and with a small smile before continuing to look at the box. "There's even more here... Oh, here's a letter!"

Dixie took an envelope that, from what she guessed, was a letter inside written by Diddy. Obviously, Dixie couldn't wait to read it, but... when she opened the envelope, she stared inside carefully and showed a confused face.

"Huh? What's up, Dix?" Diddy asked, noticing Dixie's expression.

"It's that... there's nothing here," Dixie replied, showing the inside of the envelope.

Diddy was shocked again to see that, in fact, there was no letter or anything inside the envelope. Diddy was confused and disappointed again since he was sure he had kept the letter in there.

"But... how is it possible?" Diddy said as he quickly grabbed the envelope and checked back inside. "Oh, it can't be, if I'm sure I recently saved it... Or maybe I left it. Sorry again, Dixie."

"Okay, Diddy, you can give it to me later," Dixie replied, cheering him up with a light laugh.

Dixie felt a little bad for Diddy, but she didn't want to make him feel guilty, and continued to cherish the gift. Then, she took some of the flowers that were there: they were all varied, which caught her attention and she started looking at each one of them.

"Wow, the flowers are so pretty," Dixie said as she examined the flowers. "All are of different colors and also- *AAHHH!*"

Suddenly, Dixie started screaming loudly, which alarmed Diddy. She began to shake her arm in desperation as she dropped the box to the floor and, with it, the jar of chewing gum. Upon better watch, Diddy noticed that small carnivorous plants, apparently among the flowers, were biting Dixie's arm aggressively.

"Don't worry! I'll help you!" Diddy exclaimed when he hastened to help Dixie.

Dixie screamed in pain as Diddy struggled to remove the plants from her. After several attempts, he succeeded... Although at the time of removing them, it was hurting Dixie's arm much more. Diddy threw the plants to the ground immediately as they were very aggressive.

"Oh, no, Dix. Are you okay?" Diddy said as she held her bruised forearm.

"No, it hurts a lot!" Dixie exclaimed, complaining of pain.

Then, Dixie showed her arm better to Diddy. Both were shocked to see that she had considerable injuries, since those plants had scratched Dixie's forearm quite a bit.

"Oh, no, you got hurt a lot. Forgive me, I didn't know there was a carnivorous plant there!" Diddy explained, all disappointed that his surprise gift had ended in disaster. "We'll call Mr. Pinky! Come on!"

Diddy and Dixie went upstairs to the house. Diddy had to help Dixie up, as she couldn't get it right with one of her arms. Immediately, they knocked on Mr. Pinky's door, and then he came out within a few seconds.

"Yeah? What's going on, guys?" the teacher asked them before noticing Dixie's expression as she held her arm.

"You see, mister, an accident happened," Diddy said, still holding Dixie's arm. "I gave Dixie a surprise gift, and it was carrying flowers. But apparently, there were carnivorous plants inside and they attacked Dixie on the arm."

"But what are you saying?!" the teacher exclaimed in alarm. "Let me see your arm, Miss Dixie."

Mr. Pinky examined Dixie's arm and made a gesture of oblivious pain at the sight of her injuries.

"Oh, you should be careful when you are handling wild plants, children," the teacher advised them with concern. "Come in, I'll put something on Miss Dixie's arm."

Both went inside the teacher's house and sat on the sofa to wait for him, while he searched inside a medicine cabinet for some product for the wounds. A couple of minutes later, the teacher walked towards Dixie and proceeded to clean her wound and put a bandage on her. It was obvious that the wound was still not going to heal completely and would continue to cause Dixie discomfort.

"Where did you get those flowers you gave to Miss Dixie, Mr. Diddy?" the teacher asked.

"Our new friends had them," Diddy replied.

"Hmm, you must ask them what happened there; it's very strange," the teacher added, finishing bandaging Dixie's arm. "It's done, Miss Dixie, you should rest now."

"Thank you very much, Mr. Pinky," Dixie replied, still in pain. "You are very kind."

Diddy and Dixie left the teacher's house, and then went down to the porch where their room was. They were going to enter until they noticed that some known silhouettes were under the tree of the house.

"Hey! Diddy! Dixie!" their four friends called them.

"Ah, hi, friends!" Diddy replied, leaning out. "Can you go up for a moment please? I wanted to ask you something."

The four of them went upstairs to the house because Dixie would have a hard time going down for the time being.

"How about it, friends? How did you go on with your surprise gift?" asked Mandy before noticing, along with the other three kids, Dixie's arm.

"But... what happened to Dixie?!" Jenny asked in shock.

"You see, friends, I don't know if you've noticed before, but... in the flowers you showed me, there was a carnivorous plant and it attacked Dixie," Diddy explained.

"What?! A... *carnivorous plant*?" exclaimed the four, looking confused and shocked.

"But what are you saying? There were no carnivorous plants in those flowers, it shouldn't," Mandy said, looking at them in confusion and carefully grasping Dixie's arm.

"We checked them well and there was nothing," Jenny added in the same way. "Oh, no, we're really sorry, friends. It must have been our fault," she added with a low look.

"No, don't worry, maybe that plant was infiltrated by accident," Dixie replied, calming them down. "Oh, and I also thank you guys for helping Diddy with the details... even if it turned out like that."

"And what about the other things in the gift?" Ricky asked. "Was everything okay?"

"Well, in fact everything was ruined," replied Diddy, disappointed in himself. "The emerald broke, the letter was lost and the chewing gum fell off when Dixie was attacked by that plant."

"Oh, no, we're so sorry, friends," Melvyn said, pitied along with the other three.

The four were baffled by the event, as they had all made an effort to help Diddy with his surprise gift for Dixie.

"Uh, hey... but I think we have something to fix this," Jenny told them after a few seconds. "Is your injury serious, Dixie?"

"Yes... and it hurts a lot," Dixie replied, rubbing her arm.

"Well, do you remember we mentioned that we know a *medicine ape*? He had a remedy that can heal wounds in less than five minutes."

"You mean what he used to heal my injury, Jenny?" asked Mandy.

"That one!"

"In less than *five minutes*?" asked Dixie, looking at them strangely. "Are you saying it... seriously?"

"Yes, literally, in less than five minutes it even leaves you without a scar," Ricky said. "It worked with Mandy last time, do you remember?"

Diddy and Dixie were incredulous at first; a wound of that magnitude was not going to heal completely in such a short time, so they thought the four of them were exaggerating. But then, they remembered the first days they met them when Mandy had hurt her leg and the next day she was like nothing had happened, so they decided to try what they said.

"Okay, if you say so... let's see if it's true," Diddy replied with a smile of disbelief. "Let's see the medicine ape you say."

"Uhh... is that there is another detail," Jenny said. "To go where he is, you have to inform him in advance and... it will take much longer, so we could go just the four of us since he already knows

us and will give us that remedy instantly.”

"And besides, he's kind of grumpy too," Mandy whispered. "He doesn't want anyone to visit him, but he already knows us.”

"Yeah, just wait for us here and we'll bring it to you," Ricky added. "We won't be long, okay?”

"Oh, okay, no problem," Diddy replied.

"Yeah, besides I have to rest," Dixie added.

"Well, so, we'll come back later, friends," Mandy said as everyone said goodbye.

The four came down from the house and went in search of the remedy they mentioned. Although on the other hand, Diddy and Dixie just wanted to laugh about it; their four new friends always had something strange to tell or show. Even so, they made them smile with every occurrence they told them.

“Do you believe them about that *remedy*?” Diddy asked Dixie, trying not to let out a laugh.

"I don't know, I think they made it up; such a wound doesn't heal completely in a week," Dixie replied in the same tone. "But we'll see if it's true.”

"Our friends are kind of funny," Diddy said with a smile.

Dixie still had to take a break, so she sat outside on the porch of the house, and Diddy also stayed next to her. It was clear that Diddy felt too guilty; he had tried hard to plan a surprise gift for Dixie, but it ended in disaster and even an accident.

"Hey, Diddy, but seriously, you were very nice about the gift and-" Dixie said before turning and looking at Diddy's low expression. "What's wrong?”

"Oh, I really wanted to give you a surprise gift... but it all went wrong," Diddy replied with disappointment. "Truly, I'm sorry, Dix. I didn't want this to end like this. Look at you, you even ended up being attacked by a plant.”

Dixie began to feel sorry for Diddy as well. She didn't want him to feel bad about it, since after all, she at least knew that he had the good intention, and she appreciated that quite a bit. Dixie just glanced at him, and then hugged him for a while.

"Don't worry, everything was still nice and you made me smile a lot, believe me you did," Dixie told him as she held him in a sweet hug and smiled at him. "And this wound will heal... If you want, you can give me another new surprise gift later.”

"I know... but everything was ruined, not even the bubblegums were left," Diddy added.

"It doesn't matter anymore, Diddy, at least you tried and I still thank you very much for the detail you had with me," she added before giving him a kiss on the cheek. "I love you so much, Diddy, and you always make me so happy.”

Diddy couldn't help blushing, and automatically smiled again; he knew that at least Dixie would be glad that he had thought of her and had some surprise detail, even though a disaster had come out. Then, Diddy smiled at her and hugged her too.

"I love you too, Dix," Diddy replied, stroking her cheeks and then her hair.

The two held each other for a couple of minutes; being together like that was something the two of them enjoyed very much and made them feel like nothing else mattered for a moment.

"Hey, and... what do you think if we go out or something?" Dixie suggested after a while.

"I think it's a good idea," Diddy replied. "But don't you have to take a break?"

"Oh, that's true," Dixie complained, looking at her own arm. "Or what if we go up to the last terrace up there? It would be something like a date, but without leaving home."

"Okay, then tonight," Diddy added, smiling. "Now we have to keep waiting for our friends to return with that 'remedy' they mentioned."

Both continued in that place for a while, waiting for their four friends to return, although to tell the truth... they were taking a long time and it was almost dark. It had even been half an hour and there was still no sign of them. Diddy and Dixie only thought that such a "remedy" was just an invention of their friends.

Suddenly, those four kong children appeared and called Diddy and Dixie later. The latter leaned out to receive them.

"Hey, I thought you weren't coming anymore!" Diddy said to small laughs from above. "Come up!"

The four kids went back up to the house, while bringing a small jar with a liquid of a light blue color. After all, it seemed that at least they had brought it, but now they would have to check if it really worked as they claimed.

"Excuse us, we took a long time because that medicine ape had to prepare the mixture," Mandy told them.

"And it took too long," Melvyn added, shrugging.

"Well, let me see your arm, Dixie," Jenny said as she held the jar.

Dixie, though in much disbelief, removed the bandage from her arm and showed them her wound. The four of them made a gesture of pain and compassion upon seeing it.

"Wow, that plant really hurt you," Jenny said as she held her arm. "Well, now look at this. It'll only hurt a little."

Jenny opened the bottle and poured the liquid on the wound that Dixie had, she felt a little pain because this mixture made her a burning effect.

"Now, you just have to wait," Jenny told her as she looked at the wound carefully.

Everyone crowded together to look at Dixie's arm and see what happened. For the first few seconds, everything was still the same, but to Diddy and Dixie's surprise, little by little the wound was changing like magic and, almost a minute later... the wound was closing and getting smaller and smaller to the point of recovering the lost fur of Dixie in that area of her arm. By the end, Dixie's arm had been completely healed, as if nothing had happened to her.

"B-but, *how*!?" Diddy and Dixie exclaimed, shocked.

"You saw, it worked!" Ricky said with excitement next to the group. "And you didn't want to believe us."

Diddy and Dixie looked at each other shocked at such an event. Dixie didn't even feel pain anymore and looked at her arm; in the end, what their friends said about that remedy had turned out to be true.

"It's... impressive!" Dixie said, cheerful and astonished. "Where do you know that medicine ape from?"

"We've known him for a long time," Ricky replied.

Suddenly, Mr. Pinky appeared, interrupting the conversation to call Diddy and Dixie. Then, he was also surprised to see the other four kong children there.

"It's time for dinner, kids- Huh?" the teacher paused when he saw the new group. "Oh, hello... Let me guess: are you Mr. Diddy and Miss Dixie's friends?"

"Yes, mister, it's them," Diddy replied, pointing at them.

"Nice to see you... Mr. Pinky, I'm Melvyn," Melvyn said, running to shake his hand like a little child.

The quartet greeted Mr. Pinky, each saying their names, while the teacher waved back... although he also gave them a look of strangeness. Diddy and Dixie had mentioned to him that they were his students, although he didn't seem to remember them well.

"Wow, so you're their new friends. Nice meeting you too, children," the teacher replied kindly. "Mr. Diddy and Miss Dixie always talk to me about you; they say you're good friends... Oh, and they tell me that you were my students, is that... true?"

"Ah, yes, Mr. Pinky, don't you remember us?" Jenny asked. "We were your students a couple of years ago."

The teacher frowned as he kept his hand on his chin as if trying to remember, but apparently, he couldn't.

"Hey... Uhh, I just want you to excuse me, but... *I don't remember* you," replied the teacher, earning a few low glances from the four of them. "I mean, I've had so many students; I don't always remember them all."

"Don't you really remember us, Mr. Pinky?" Melvyn asked with a sad look. "I was your favorite student."

"Favorite student?" the teacher kept trying to remember, but apparently, he couldn't remember them. "Oh... I'm really sorry, kids, but I don't remember seeing your faces. But don't worry, I could meet you again," he added, smiling at them in the last sentence... But suddenly, he changed his face again. "Hmm, although... *excuse me for a moment*."

Suddenly, Mr. Pinky showed a very serious expression again as he looked at the four of them. He then specifically headed to Mandy, picked all her short hair up with one hand, and then let go.

Suddenly, the teacher's face changed to an expression of shock... while Mandy was confused by his gesture.

"W-what's up, Mr. Pinky?" Mandy asked, looking a little confused.

"Your name is Mandy, right?" the teacher asked, to which Mandy nodded. "Oh, sorry, it's that... you look a lot like a little girl who disappeared on this island a few months ago and they have been searching for her so much. Although she had her hair up and her name was Destiny."

The four kong children along with Diddy and Dixie looked strangely at the teacher at what he said.

"No, no, I've never disappeared," Mandy said in a confused tone. "We haven't even had a family."

"That's funny," Ricky added with a frown. "Diddy and Dixie took us to the animal shelter and there a gorilla male told me that I looked like his son who disappeared."

"Oh, it must be a coincidence," exclaimed the teacher pensively. "Just forget what I said, I think it was just a confusion."

"By the way, Mr. Pinky," Dixie said. "Recently they brought me a remedy that healed my wound, look!"

Dixie showed her arm to the teacher, and he was more shocked than they were recently.

"Say what?! How is this possible?!" exclaimed the teacher without ceasing to be surprised. "But if your injury was quite considerable, Miss Dixie. What did they do it with?"

"It's with this remedy, mister," Jenny replied, showing him the bottle with the light blue liquid. "It can heal a wound in less than five minutes."

"They know a medicine ape who makes these mixtures," Diddy added in amazement.

"A medicine ape? I don't remember knowing that there was a medicine ape here," said the teacher, looking strangely. "Where does he live?"

"Uhh... well, he lives in a corner of this island, in a cave," Ricky replied. "But he doesn't want anyone to visit him, that's why he's not as well known."

"Okay, it was a good act on your part to help Miss Dixie anyways," the teacher said, smiling serenely. "By the way, it's going to be time for dinner, don't you want to come too as an act of gratitude?"

"Oh, we really thank you, Mr. Pinky," Mandy said before continuing. "But... we already have something prepared at our house, so it could be for another occasion."

"No, no, I can't just leave you like that," the teacher replied. "Or if you want, take it home, what do you think?"

The four children seemed to want to go home, but they accepted the teacher's dinner, so he just gave it to them to take with them home.

Minutes later, the four kids were already going home, but not before saying goodbye to Diddy and Dixie on the main stairs.

"Hey, I forgot," Dixie said to the four of them with a small laugh. "Thanks for the remedy, seriously, I didn't think it would work, but you have saved me."

"You're welcome, Dixie. You know, that's what friends are for," Jenny replied cheerfully along with the other three. "And we apologize again for what happened to your gift," she added with an embarrassed smile next to the group.

"No, don't worry anymore, it was an accident," Diddy replied, calming them down. "After all, another time it may turn out better."

"Well, I guess it's time to go," Ricky said, looking up at the sky. "It's getting late."

Diddy and Dixie went to accompany their friends to the outside of the house, and then say goodbye to them better.

"See you later! Rest well," Diddy and Dixie told them in succession.

"See you later, friends," the four of them replied, smiling.

"And don't forget about the boat we're going to build," Ricky whispered to them with the others.

"Obviously not," Diddy replied, gesturing at them.

Diddy and Dixie finished saying goodbye to them, and then returned to Mr. Pinky's house for dinner. That day was also a special meal, which was quite exciting for both little kongs.

While the three of them set the table, they were talking about the group of Diddy and Dixie's new friends... Apparently, Mr. Pinky was somewhat doubtful.

"Hey, it's not for nothing but... I think your friends are a little... *weird*," Mr. Pinky said with a serious expression.

"Weird in what sense, mister?" Diddy asked, confused at what he was saying.

"It's that... I don't know, but they have something that... Oh, I don't know how to explain it, but there's something about them that's very strange," replied the teacher looking into nothingness.

"Well, they've been called weird because they don't like water, they have allergies to it, they don't like banana cake or they don't like rain. But they're cool," Dixie said with a shrug. "We have gotten along very well with them."

"No, it's not because of those things, it's... something else they have," the teacher insisted before pausing. "By the way, is that true about the medicine ape they mentioned?"

"We don't know him, but they always mention him," Diddy replied, laughing a little. "We didn't want to believe them either, but the remedy they brought did work for Dixie."

"And those children live totally alone?" the teacher asked them with a look of strangeness.

"Yes, they say they've always lived that way," Dixie replied. "And that they have been living on different islands from time to time, but they have already passed through this island before."

"Oh, and they've really never had a family?" the teacher asked again. "I mean... they are just children, no one has taken care of them at least?"

"No, they say they've always abandoned them," Diddy replied.

Diddy and Dixie sat down to dinner quietly. Although the teacher was still pensive... as if he seemed to have seen something in Diddy and Dixie's new friends, but didn't know what it was exactly.

Later in the evening, Diddy and Dixie were leaning out on the balconies of the last terrace of the entire house, as they had agreed in the afternoon. It was a nice place, as it was all clear and, due to its height, they could better look at the sky and much of the island. It was a perfect place to hang out.

"Hey, Dixie," Diddy said. "Do you think Mr. Pinky liked our friends?"

"I wonder the same thing, because he looked a little pensive when he met them," Dixie questioned. "What did he mean by finding them weird?"

"Maybe they are, but I didn't understand Mr. Pinky what he meant," Diddy added pensively, before just shrugging his shoulders and putting the topic aside. "By the way, how is your arm going, Dixie?"

"It's better. I feel like nothing happened to me."

"So, that remedy they brought is really effective," Diddy said, smiling... before feeling guilty about what happened again. "Oh, but I'm really sorry, Dixie, I just wanted to make a surprise gift for you."

"Oh, don't apologize anymore, Diddy," Dixie said, trying to cheer him up. "Anyway, everything is already fine, and so am I."

Seconds later, Dixie leaned on Diddy's shoulder and hugged him affectionately. Then, he reciprocated in kind, making him smile again seeing that after all, she was happy at that moment.

"Dixie..." Diddy said later, looking at her and gently taking her hair. "You know? I really feel very happy to have you; you make me feel too many... beautiful things. I feel like I could love you like this forever, seriously," he added with some joy.

"Oh, Diddy..." Dixie replied, laughing and blushing a little. "You always manage to make me smile... You are such a cute little monkey with me, you don't know how happy I'm with you."

Diddy smiled at her tenderly, and then she smiled back in the same way. Then Dixie got closer to his face so she could kiss him, and Diddy was going to reciprocate, but then he stopped suddenly.

"Wait! It's Mr. Pinky!" Diddy whispered as he heard the teacher's footsteps coming up the stairs.

Suddenly, Mr. Pinky also went up to the terrace and, instantly, Diddy and Dixie settled into normal postures.

"Excuse me, Mr. Diddy," said the teacher with a smile and looking his eyebrow up. "Haven't you forgotten *something* in the kitchen?"

"Oh, right!" Diddy exclaimed, looking frightened. "Wait for me, Dixie, I'll be right back."

Diddy went down with Mr. Pinky to his house, and Dixie waited for him for a couple of minutes. When Diddy returned, to her surprise, he brought a small cake, the size only for the two of them. After all, Diddy didn't want to stay without having given Dixie something.

"Uhh... this is for you, Dixie," Diddy said, handing her the little dessert.

Dixie was surprised by the detail: the cake was made of bananas and on top of it had a heart with their names drawn with cream. Dixie couldn't help showing a big smile.

"Diddy! Did you do this?" Dixie asked, looking excitedly at the cake.

"Yes, just as you were taking your break. Well, actually... Mr. Pinky helped me, of course," Diddy replied, smiling and scratching his head. "You know, I wanted to give you a surprise gift, even if it's something small."

"Oh, Diddy, you never cease to amaze me. I thank you so much," Dixie said, smiling and blushing a little, before hugging him tightly. "And well, what are we waiting for? Let's eat."

They both sat on the floor along with the dessert and were getting ready to try it. But before, Diddy made them stop.

"Wait a minute... where *did* we stay?" said Diddy to Dixie with a playful look.

Dixie caught the idea and returned the same look, before throwing herself at him and then sharing the kiss they had pending; they could not miss the playful laughter when they separated. After the love moment, they proceeded to eat the banana dessert together.

Chapter End Notes

I search in on web, and I found out that carnivorous plants don't really attack 🍌. Anyway... suppose here those are plants like those of Mario Bros' world XD.

Chapter 43: The Ship

The following week had arrived. Diddy and Dixie planned to meet with their four friends on the island to begin the plan they had proposed: to build a *huge ship* that would last long enough to make it through hurricane season, so that Diddy and Dixie could finally return to DK Island safely... Although both of them still thought that maybe it was just a game, because it was something very complex to achieve something like this in a short time and done by only six little apes; even the two of them had had a hard time building the boat they did when they tried to return to DK Island the first few days.

Diddy and Dixie were on their way to their friends' house. They decided not to tell Mr. Pinky anything about it yet, since it was obvious how he would react, although to tell the truth, they didn't hide it so much because of that, but because something told them that, anyway, that ship would be finished when the hurricane season also ended; they knew that a small group of six kongs wouldn't manage to finish it in record time. And other than that, they thought that maybe they could have fun in the process of trying to build, and thus spend more fun times with their four friends.

As they arrived, Jenny and Ricky got out of their house, and went down before Diddy and Dixie went upstairs. Apparently, they had something to say to both of them.

"Hi, friends!" Diddy and Dixie said, smiling at them.

"How are you, Diddy and Dixie?!" Jenny and Ricky replied in the same way.

"Will we start with the boat today?" Diddy asked them.

"Yes, of course," Jenny replied, before smiling with some tension. "Although... we have some *news*."

"Really? What happened?" Dixie asked.

"It's that you don't know something that happened to us," Ricky said. "Do you remember that we told you that when we were little there was a massive abandonment of children?"

"A couple of days ago we were taking a walk," Jenny continued, "and to our surprise, we came across some of those kids."

"Wow, wait a minute," Diddy said in confusion. "Are you referring to those kids you lived with when you were little?... The ones you didn't get along with?"

"Yes, the same ones," Ricky replied. "But that was many years ago when we were very young. Now that we met them again, we decided to forget all those grudges and better be friends."

"By the way, they're at our house right now," Jenny said. "Do you want to come and meet them?"

"What?!" Dixie exclaimed, confused, too. "*Right now*?"

"Yeah, come, they're cool," Ricky added, taking Diddy and Dixie's arms.

"Hey, is it serious?!" Diddy asked, all confused.

"Yes, really!" Jenny exclaimed, smiling. "We were waiting to introduce them to you."

"Say what...?" Dixie said, still surprised, as they were invited to the house.

Diddy and Dixie were all confused: their new friends now had other new friends? Or well... actually old friends, but... were they saying that they had met them again just now?

They both went up together with Ricky and Jenny to the house, although to tell the truth, Diddy and Dixie were a little nervous to meet new kongs to the two of them and, at the same time, they were still confused at the sudden announcement that their friends had given them.

"Oh, right... there's another detail," Ricky told them before entering the house. "I only ask you to have a little patience with them, is that some are very shy and others instead are somewhat rowdy, so to speak. Oh, and let's say some of them are not very *civilized*."

"But don't worry," Jenny added, smiling, "they've all changed, and now they're good kids."

Then, Ricky opened the door and they entered the house. When Diddy and Dixie walked in... they were greeted with stares and a little awkward gaze by maybe a dozen kong boys and girls, all of different species and characteristics: some appeared to be the same age as them and others looked a little younger or older. Diddy and Dixie felt the same feeling a new student would have in a classroom. Mandy and Melvyn were with all of them accompanying them.

"Hey! Diddy! Dixie! How are you?" said Mandy, greeting them with joy, before pointing to the herd of kong children. "Oh, yeah, look, we introduce you to some old friends; they-"

"You are Diddy and Dixie?!" asked one of the children, suddenly approaching the two.

"Well, yes... it's us," Diddy replied in confusion.

"Ricky, Melvyn, Jenny and Mandy talk a lot about you!" added another of the children with a voice too cheerful. "They say you are their best friends."

"Yes, yes... Of course," Dixie replied with a forced smile.

"Is it true that you saved them from a kidnapper ape?!" they continued asking.

"You two are a couple?!" another of the kids asked them.

Suddenly, several of the children crowded toward Diddy and Dixie, asking them nonstop questions. Many of them spoke in a lively voice as if they thought Diddy and Dixie were celebrities. Diddy and Dixie tried to answer them, but they were all talking at once and they couldn't even hear them well. The two were beginning to feel a little uncomfortable about the desperate crowding of these children and were just wondering: where had so many kong children come from?

"*HEY! Stop now! Silence!*" Mandy exclaimed, making everyone quiet. "Let them talk, you are scaring them!"

"Oh, we're sorry," the children said in succession as they walked away from Diddy and Dixie again.

"Uh, excuse us, friends," Mandy said to Diddy and Dixie. "As I said, they are all our old friends, the ones we mentioned from when we were abandoned almost as babies. A few days ago, they

arrived right on this island and we met again, and well... we received them here. Now, everyone greet Diddy and Dixie.”

All the kong children greeted Diddy and Dixie, this time more calmly, while the two introduced themselves to them and, likewise, each of the children introduced themselves with their respective names. Although to tell the truth... Diddy and Dixie were somewhat uncomfortable, what would they do now with so many "new friends"?

"Well, now wait a while, please," Jenny said to everyone else, before heading to the kong couple. "Diddy, Dixie, we have to talk to you, let's go outside.”

Diddy and Dixie looked at each other quite confusedly, but then agreed. The four left the house along with Diddy and Dixie to talk more privately with the two of them.

"Now yes. Uhh... excuse their attitudes," Jenny clarified with a small laugh. "It's that they're all new here and sometimes they get a little hyperactive.”

"We already realized," Diddy said with a forced smile.

"Yeah, and as we mentioned, some are not totally *civilized*," Ricky added. "You know, everyone here grew up without a family, so there are some who don't know much about life, or are very quiet, and there are also others who are kind of hyperactive. Even not everyone is one hundred percent *sane*, so to speak, so we had to have some patience with them.”

"So... wouldn't it bother you if we have them here for a while?" Mandy asked them both.

"No, of course not, not at all," Diddy replied with a bit of insecurity. "After all, they are old friends of yours. By the way, in case they are looking for a place to stay, they can also go to the animal shelter-”

"Oh, no, don't worry about that," Ricky said smilingly. "We'll make some small booths for them to stay during these weeks. They'll only be here temporarily, as they were brought here also by the hurricane.”

"Okay. So, we don't have any problems," Dixie added in the same way as Diddy. "Uhh... but what about the huge ship we were going to build now?"

"That's exactly what we wanted to talk to you," Ricky said. "You see, I hope you don't mind this either, but... we told them about our ship building plan, and in fact, they told us they can help us too.”

"Really?!" Diddy and Dixie exclaimed, much more confused.

"Yes, really. Some of them also want to travel somewhere else," Mandy added, "so we told them they can join our trip. And they're very excited to build our boat as well.”

"But wait a minute," Dixie interrupted, about wanting to give up. "And... how are they all supposed to help us?"

"Don't worry, we're going to teach them how to build a boat, including you," Jenny replied. "And rest assured; when the ship is ready, we'll take you home first.”

Diddy and Dixie were somewhat doubtful; they had the idea that the ship would only be for the six of them, but now... would it be for about twenty crew members? It was clear that Diddy and Dixie didn't feel so comfortable with the other children due to their unexpected appearance, but they only hoped to get to know them better and thus be able to change their perception. Although after all, it wouldn't be bad to have more hands collaborating on a large construction like the one their friends planned.

"Okay... So, what are we waiting for?" Diddy said with a forced smile and not yet so determined. "We can start as soon as possible."

"Well, so, let's talk to the others," Ricky said, inviting them back into the house.

The six of them re-entered the house while the other kong children were talking to each other.

"Hey, everybody!" Jenny exclaimed, calming them all. "As you know, we're going to build that huge ship, so... let's start now."

And then, that "megaproject" was launched. What could already be considered a herd of kong children, went in search of a perfect site for the construction of the great ship. The place they chose was a place not so far from the house of the four and at the same time close to the sea; it was large enough for the size of what would be such a boat, and also had several trees behind it that could give more privacy to the construction.

As they were all gathered in that chosen place, the group of four kids showed the rest a sketch plan of what the ship would be: it was very detailed and had almost perfect strokes of each perspective of the ship and its dimensions, in addition to a quite clear explanation of the instructions. Diddy and Dixie gasped for a few seconds at the sight of all that.

"Well, here's all we have to do," Jenny said to the others, pointing to the entire plan. "We'll have to follow *everything* to a T. Don't worry, we'll help you with any difficulties you have."

"Hey... and where did you get this sketch plan?" Diddy asked them curiously, looking at it with a look of strangeness.

"We did it," Melvyn replied. "It took us two whole days to do it."

"Wow... I didn't know you drew so well," Dixie flattered, still admiring the sketch plan. "Seriously, it's all good... *detailed*."

"Oh, thank you," Jenny replied, laughing with the group. "Well, the first thing we'll do is get the materials, so we'll have to divide. We can go to the beaches, since there are many remains of boats."

Everyone was assigned to fetch every material they needed; in general, the one that was most required was wood, so they had to go in groups to areas of fallen trees to get it, since they had to assemble large pieces, they even went to the areas where the remains of boats were, where they could get a lot of pieces to recycle in the work. Likewise, the group of four had brought a few tools for construction. Diddy and Dixie were still somewhat confused by the unexpected events, but they still played along with their four friends.

The quartet of friends of Diddy and Dixie showed good knowledge about the whole process and guided others very well. Previously, Diddy and Dixie had thought that between only six kongs they

couldn't carry out the construction well, but with the arrival of those old friends of the four kids, they were convincing themselves that maybe they could finish that ship as they had planned, that by the way, those new children worked very well, as if they also knew a lot about those things; they were even more serious during the work than when they met them recently.

"How long have you been friends with Ricky and the other three?" the new kongs asked Diddy and Dixie.

"Maybe about four weeks ago," Diddy replied.

"You've known them all your life, haven't you?" Dixie asked.

"Yes, since when our parents had abandoned us," replied one of the new kong children. "We were a whole herd of kids."

"Hey, and by chance... is it true that you didn't get along with them?" Dixie asked the children.

"Yes, but that was a long time ago; we already have become friends," the kong children replied.

"That was a little kid thing," he added with a slight laugh. "Hey, what island do you come from?"

"From DK Island. What about you?" Diddy told them.

"We've been to several islands," replied another of the children. "And what do you like to do? Do you like to play on the beach?"

"Uh, yes, you guys too?" Dixie replied, continuing the conversation.

Diddy and Dixie, during the search for materials, talked to the other children they had met; they were already starting to sympathize with them and, as their four friends had mentioned to them: some of them were shy and quiet while others were outgoing and talked too much. Although to tell the truth, some were somewhat strange; there were a few who literally spoke almost nothing or showed much expression. However, Diddy and Dixie were liking the new kongs better; they appeared to be good and quite friendly children that even Diddy and Dixie didn't understand how it's that their four friends said that they treated them badly and made fun of them when they were little children, although perhaps as they had been told, they were things of little and immature children.

The first thing they did to start the construction was to assemble a support so that it could hold the entire ship during its construction. As they did so, the main quartet reunited with Diddy and Dixie.

"How about you, friends?" Mandy spoke to both of them. "What do you think of our old friends who arrived?"

"Well, I liked them," Dixie replied as she helped Diddy hold one of the beams of the construction support.

"Me too; they seem to be cool," Diddy added, smiling. "Did they really used to treat you as weirdos?... Because they don't seem to be like that."

"As we told you, that was many, many years ago. The past stepped on," Ricky said with a shrug before pause. "Hey, and we wanted to tell you that after this support we are going to start with the structure of the ship."

"We're going to need the help of several of us here," Jenny added. "This is one of the most complex steps."

The whole herd continued with the process. While the others were taking care of small pieces of the ship, the quartet was teaching Diddy and Dixie important steps such as the ship's base structure. Diddy and Dixie, who had initially underestimated their four friends, were amazed at their good command of guiding them all and their knowledge. Even, both didn't know why, but... they were no longer seen much as a quartet of helpless and itinerant children; from that day on, they were seen in a different way.

"Where did you learn all this from?" Diddy asked the four as they gave them instructions with wooden beams.

"We've been perfecting ourselves all these years," Mandy replied, smiling firmly. "And of course, it's not that it has been easy either. You cannot imagine the number of boats that were terrible at the beginning. But now we have already improved a lot."

"That's great, I see you guys know quite a bit," Dixie added, flattering them along with Diddy. "You should be boat builders."

"That's what we thought," Ricky said, smiling at them. "But we prefer to be free... And well, as I said, you have to put those beams over the bonfire so that they bend; they are called frames and they are important in the internal structure of the boat."

Diddy and Dixie took charge of what the four of them were assigned, while they went to get more materials. As they had been instructed, with the help of some of the other kongs, they put several wooden beams over a large bonfire, having to watch them and change their position constantly so that they would not overdo it with the fire. Both Diddy and Dixie were surprised at how the day was going so far.

"It looks like we'll be able to get back to DK Island early," Dixie said to Diddy quietly, seeing that they had started off pretty well. "I think our friends are serious."

"I hope so," Diddy replied, smiling and shrugging. "The only thing I hope is that Mr. Pinky is not going to go crazy when we tell him... Although anyway, I feel like we'll be ending this at the same time as the hurricanes, so he won't tell us anything bad."

"I don't think he'll tell us anything bad without hurricanes," Dixie added in the same way. "Hey, but seriously... I didn't think our friends really knew that much about building boats, I mean... they know things that not even my cousins, my sister and I knew when we built boats or rafts."

"Yeah, I thought they were just joking," Diddy continued. "Wow, they have to have experienced enough to know much about boats. I swore this was going to be just a game, but we're seriously building a ship."

"Hey, but it's real," said one of the newly arrived kong children, intruding on the conversation. "Ricky, Melvyn, Mandy and Jenny told us that we are going to sail on this ship."

"We already realized," Dixie replied with a forced smile, before returning to normal. "By the way, have you also learned about boats?"

"Of course," replied another of the new children. "This is what we have learned all these years living on various islands."

The small group continued with the procedure they were in: Diddy was on one side lifting one of the long beams to change direction, while Dixie was at the other end. Everyone had to be very synchronized so as not to damage the beams and, with the help of the other children, it was made less complicated.

"Hey, Diddy," Jenny called him, coming to them. "Could you come and help us with something?"

"Yes, what's going on?" Diddy asked her as he held the beam.

"We need some specific vines that we saw over there, but they are very high. Could you help me take them down, please?"

"Okay, I'm going to in a while," Diddy replied.

After a few minutes, Diddy went to tell Dixie and the others that he would be away for a while, and then went along with Jenny where she had indicated. They came to a place full of trees where at the top there were a huge lot of vines and, as Jenny had mentioned, they were at a considerable height, and the group of the four kids used to fear great heights.

"Those are, Diddy, could you get them down?" Jenny pointed to the vines above the tree.

"Ah, that's very easy," Diddy replied before starting to climb. "Wait here, I'll get them down."

Diddy climbed up the trees until he reached the pointed vines. Then, with a little difficulty, he took out several of them and dropped them to the ground. It took him a few minutes, as these were hard to tear off, but then he finished and came back down from the trees without further complications.

"Wow, Diddy, you made it!" Jenny exclaimed with excitement.

"Well, it was just a little hard to get them off," Diddy said, smiling as he finished climbing down the tree with the vines in hand. "Now we just have to untangle them."

Diddy placed the vines on the ground, and then began to untangle and collect some of them along with Jenny, since they would have to select the ones that were in better condition.

"Geez, they're too tangled," Jenny commented, helping to untie them. "Although this is already the least difficult... How have you done so far with the ship building? It's just getting started, though, of course," she added with a slight laugh.

"All right for the moment," Diddy replied with a nod. "Hey, but you know? Dixie and I thought you guys were just joking or that this ship was going to be just for playing."

"Really? No, no, we were serious," Jenny replied with a little laugh. "How do you think we were going to lie to you? We already told you: we want to help you return to your island. If it was just a game, we would have told you."

"If you say so," Diddy replied in kind. "But well, the important thing is that we have already started, and despite recently we didn't want to believe you so much," he added with a few small laughs."

"Why did you think that?" Jenny added, laughing with a look of surprise. "This was serious."

Both continued to untangle the vines for several minutes. Suddenly, Jenny began to look at Diddy for a long time and, at the same time... *she was starting to smile at him.*

"Hey, Diddy," Jenny said, heading toward him. "Has Dixie told you you're a cute monkey?"

"She always tells me that," Diddy replied with a little laugh as he continued to untangle the vines. "Why?"

Suddenly, Jenny began to get a little closer to Diddy, earning a look of strangeness from him.

"I see... Because... *you really are*, Diddy."

"Uhh... really?" Diddy said, looking confused and with a forced smile.

"Yes, Diddy," she replied, smiling and running her hand over Diddy's face, which became a bit strange to him. "You're a very brave monkey... and very *handsome* too. Ever since I met you, I've thought that about you, Diddy, you know?"

"Uhh, yes, thank you, Jenny, b-but... I have to go and get on with what I was doing before," Diddy replied, immediately pulling away, still with a forced smile and starting to retreat, but not before Jenny grabbed his arm.

"Hey, wait! We're not done with the vines yet," Jenny said, holding him by the arm. "Can you help me take them to the others?" she added with a smile.

Suddenly, Diddy was confused by Jenny's gestures, but decided to finish collecting the vines along with her anyways. Diddy didn't even finish untangling the vines well; he just picked them up as fast as he could, and when they were done, they both headed back to the other kongs.

"Wow, Diddy, I also see you're very *gentlemanly*," Jenny hinted before approaching again and hugging him.

"Hey, hey, wait a minute!" Diddy exclaimed, turning away earlier. "What's wrong with you, Jenny?!"

"Oh, I just wanted to give you a hug of thanks," Jenny said, laughing and fiddling with her hair.

Along the way... Diddy noticed that Jenny didn't cease to look at him, which seemed stranger to him, so he avoided having eye contact with her. He started walking faster, wanting to get there as fast as he could... He was beginning to become uncomfortable with Jenny's sudden attitude towards him; it was something he didn't expect from her and never expected.

They arrived back at the construction site, where the rest of the quartet were gathered along with Dixie. Then, Diddy and Jenny joined them.

"Ah, Diddy, you brought the vines we wanted," Ricky said as he picked up the vines. "Thank you!"

"Hey, Diddy, the beams are almost ready for us to start bending," Dixie pointed to the beams that were over the fire.

"Great, let's go right now," Diddy replied before going to Dixie.

Diddy and Dixie continued with the beams, and then folded them one by one until they gave them the curved shape for the structure of the ship, this with the help of the other kong children. Meanwhile, Diddy and Dixie's quartet of friends were assembling some upper parts of the ship as the masts for the sails, although they were just getting started.

By nightfall, everyone was tired of working all day. It had been a very hectic day, but even so, they managed to make a lot of progress on their first day. The newly arrived kong children were gathered in small groups under some trees taking their respective rest. Meanwhile, Diddy and Dixie were with their four friends under another tree.

"I think I'll sleep too much today," Melvyn said, leaning back on the tree trunk.

"My arms hurt," Mandy added in the same way.

"It wasn't too bad today, though," Ricky said, looking at the ship under construction in the distance. "It was productive after all, despite being our first day."

"In the end it turned out to be true that we would make a boat," Dixie added with a slight laugh. "Hey, and seriously we have been surprised; you know a lot about this. I thought it was just a game."

"Of course not," Jenny replied. "And if we hurry well, it can be ready in a few weeks."

"You should teach us more about ships," Diddy added, smiling at them. "It sounds good to learn these things for some emergency situation."

"And you thought we were just joking with you," Mandy told them, laughing a little.

"And we really thought so," Dixie replied the same way.

The group continued to talk until a little later. They even joined the other children who had just arrived that day. When everything was darker, they started lighting fires and mobilizing, while Diddy and Dixie knew it was time to return home.

"We have to leave, friends; Mr. Pinky must be waiting for us," Dixie said to the four of them. "Tomorrow we'll continue, right?"

"That's right, we have to work on this every day if we want to hurry," Mandy replied. "We'll wait to see you tomorrow, friends."

"Well, so, see you tomorrow, friends," Diddy said, smiling at them along with Dixie. "See you later!"

Diddy and Dixie said goodbye to everyone, including the other kongs. Their hopes of being able to return to DK Island suddenly had the green light again. They had greatly underestimated the plan of their new friends, but now it seems that there was a chance that it would go well. The only thing they were worried about was Mr. Pinky's reaction... And in fact, they were much more concerned now that the plan was going well. Although anyway, they wanted to carry out the plan calmly.

Late at night, Diddy and Dixie were already resting at home. Dixie was combing her hair, while Diddy was swinging in his hammock. The two also talked about the long day they had; about how the ship would be, what they would say to Mr. Pinky, but above all... they were talking about the other kong children who had appeared that day; those children did seem a bit strange because they didn't seem to be as their friends had described.

"I don't understand why they said they treated them badly," Diddy said of those kongs they met that day. "They all look harmless and as if they would never hurt anyone."

"I say the same thing. I thought they would be something like those fool school bullies," Dixie added as she fiddled with a bracelet of bright and colorful stones. "But they're all good. I'm just amused by their multifaceted faces... And by the way, I still don't believe how our friends have known so much about boats."

"We even made good progress despite being the first day," Diddy added. "Could it be that it's really finished in a couple of weeks as they said?"

"I think it wouldn't surprise me anymore," Dixie said, fiddling with the bracelet.

"Hey, what's that over there?" Diddy asked curiously as he observed what Dixie was carrying in her hands.

"Oh, it's a bracelet, Jenny gave it to me," Dixie replied, showing it to Diddy. "We have one each of the three of us with Mandy. It's like an accessory of friendship."

Suddenly, Diddy changed his face and was serious, as he knew something wasn't right... He remembered a *curious event that* had happened that same afternoon; he didn't want to tell Dixie, but at the same time, he needed to do it... despite not being sure if it would be correct or if it would be quite uncomfortable.

"Is something wrong, Diddy?" Dixie asked him, noticing the nervous expression on him.

"Uhh... no, it's just that..." Diddy replied slowly, beginning to fear a little for the reaction that Dixie might get. "Well, there's one thing I wanted to tell you, now that... you mention... Jenny."

"Yeah? What about her?"

Diddy had a bit regretted mentioning it, but he also knew that he would have to tell her anyway.

"Well... I hope you don't take it badly or something, but... this afternoon, when I went to help her with those vines... she was behaving in an *unusual way*."

"How?" Dixie asked, looking confused. "What do you mean, Diddy?"

"You see... In short, she was implying to me that I... seemed *cute* for her," Diddy said as he watched Dixie's expression slowly change. "She got very close to me and told me that she always thought that of me. Oh, and not to mention that when we were returning, she hugged me without wanting to let go, but I pushed away," he added, still worrying about Dixie's reaction. "And the rest of the day, I realized that every moment, she was watching me... and too much."

Dixie was shocked by what Diddy had just told her; now she also adopted a very serious face. She felt as if she had a blow to her chest, at the same time she squeezed the bracelet she was carrying

tightly and dropped it to the ground. Diddy showed himself not knowing what to do after telling her; he was afraid of how Dixie would react and right now he was watching her. He didn't want her to feel bad or worse, to think anything bad about him.

"Oh... I'm sorry, sorry, Dixie," Diddy hurriedly said as he made his way to sit next to her. "S-sorry if it bothered you that I told you that, and-"

"No... that's okay, Diddy. It's okay with you telling me," Dixie interrupted, remaining calm, but at the same time, adopting a shocked expression. "It's just that... I've noticed *certain* things about her lately."

"Huh? What are you talking about?" Diddy asked in confusion. "About what things?"

"It's that... in these last days, I have seen how she looks at you and how she stares at you... and sometimes I've caught her looking at the two of us badly," Dixie replied, looking pensive and looking down at the floor.

"What are you saying?" Diddy asked again strangely. "How has she been doing that?"

"I thought it was just my imagination. I didn't want to think badly or create speculation, but now that you tell me that... I see that it already makes sense."

Diddy was much more confused, as he hadn't even noticed anything Dixie mentioned.

"Wow, I've never noticed it. You're very observant, Dix," Diddy commented with a few small laughs, before starting to feel a little guilty about the situation and speaking quickly. "Uh, b-but no, Dixie, don't think I see her that way too, I don't want you to think badly of me... You didn't get angry, did you?"

"Well... the truth is... obviously, yes," Dixie replied truthfully and looking somewhat disappointed. "But not with you, it's just that... I don't know what to think about her now. I mean... I didn't think it was true and wanted to believe it was just my speculation."

Diddy began to feel bad; he didn't know if it was the right thing to have told her, but he had to... In addition, with the fact that he hadn't reported his bad classmates from school on time, he had already learned not to keep bad things to himself. Even so, he didn't want Dixie to feel bad.

"Dixie... Uh, you know Jenny is a friend to me just like Ricky, Melvyn and Mandy. They're our friends," Diddy added, placing a hand on Dixie's shoulder. "Please, I just don't want you to think anything bad about me."

"I know, Diddy, don't worry... It's okay if you tell me," Dixie replied again, smiling a little. "I don't think I should be mad at you for that. In addition... I hope it's just a small mishap."

Dixie, after a while, smiled at him again, which also made Diddy feel better. Then, he hugged her, feeling relieved that it wasn't a bad idea to have told that little detail to Dixie that had been tormenting him a bit the rest of the day.

Although on the other hand, while they kept embracing, Dixie again adopted a seriousness for herself... Although she wanted to take it easy, deep down she did feel a little discomfort with what Diddy had just told her; it was not because of him... but of Jenny. And it was true, she had noticed

certain attitudes of her in the past few days and made her think several things, but anyway, she didn't want to overthink too much at that time, so she tried to keep calm.

Minutes later, both said goodbye for that day, before settling into their respective hammocks to sleep. For his part, Diddy wanted to be a little calmer... However, some concern about what he told Dixie, could not leave him so calm. Although anyway, he didn't want to continue giving it importance and wanted to think that it was not something so serious.

Chapter 44: Old Friends?

The next day, the kong couple headed back to their friends, this time to the specific ship construction site. Everything seemed to be going normally... until the moment they arrived, when they found something curious: their four friends were talking to about five kong children... and those hadn't been seen the day before, apparently.

"Hey, hi, friends, how's it going?!" Ricky greeted them along with the group when he saw them both arrive.

"Hi... how are you?" Diddy and Dixie replied smiling at them, but at the same time, showing curiosity about the other kong children who were with them.

"Oh, yes, we introduce you to a few more friends who arrived," Mandy said, pointing to them and answering Diddy and Dixie's doubts. "And by the way, we warn you once and for all that more of them will keep coming these days, so don't be surprised."

"You must be Diddy and Dixie, right?!" one of the new children asked them with joy.

"Hello. Yes... the same ones," the two replied, smiling somewhat confused.

"Are you from a distant island?" asked another of the new children.

"Yes, of course. From DK Island," Diddy replied.

"You're also from several islands, aren't you?" Dixie asked.

"Yes, you guessed it," one of the children replied with a little laughter. "I guess Ricky and company must have already told you the story."

The new kongs also began interrogating Diddy and Dixie. They were both trying to appear normal, but deep down, they were also wondering why more of those old friends of their four friends had arrived. It wasn't something that bothered them, but anyway, it was as if they weren't so prepared to hang around with more new children suddenly.

After so much introduction, the four invited them again to continue with the ship, and so it was: that day they continued with the structural base of that boat. Now all the children present there helped in the work. With the arrival of the new kongs that day, the herd looked a little bigger. In the moments of rest, Diddy and Dixie talked to the new ones: they were almost the same as those they had met the day before, and anyways, they also managed to sympathize with them.

The next few days of that week were the same: everyone was focused on building the ship and was doing very well during the process, obviously with one or another problem involved, but they always managed to solve it, and the four friends of Diddy and Dixie were there to help them. Diddy and Dixie were becoming more and more convinced that they wouldn't be so far away from being able to return to DK Island in a few weeks, but at the same time, they had to think about how they would tell Mr. Pinky without getting him being alarmed; they had managed to get along super well with him and didn't want to see him disappointed in them or betray his trust.

As their friends had previously warned, something happened every day that surprised Diddy and Dixie, and that was that every day, *newer kongs arrived*, who claimed to be old friends of the four. They had become about forty new children who even had to set up small temporary huts for them to stay overnight. Even so, having more helping hands meant better work and more significant advancement with the ship. Diddy and Dixie were already more comfortable to be able to meet them all and manage to sympathize with them, although at the same time... they felt that there was something strange about them, but they couldn't explain to themselves what it was.

Among other details, there was something that didn't cease to catch the attention, especially from Dixie, and... it was *Jenny*. As Dixie mentioned: she had been noticing certain weird behaviors from her over the past few days. Dixie didn't want to create bad thoughts in her head... but now she realized that she was right. On certain occasions, she caught Jenny staring at Diddy sideways... as if waiting for some ideal moment to try to have exclusive contact with him, and so it was. Jenny, from time to time, tried to talk "accidentally" to Diddy; sometimes she asked him for favors that didn't even have to do with the ship... and she seemed to do it on purpose to be alone with him. Even so, Diddy was also aware of her attitude and when she hinted at something, and so he began to run away from her, make an excuse or even ask Dixie to accompany them as well. Dixie was uncomfortable with that and feeling some jealousy, but she didn't want to show it... at least not if there was no considerable reason. In addition, she didn't want to have any bad circumstances with Jenny, since after all she was one of her friends, whom she considered a lot.

It had been a long and laborious week for everyone, but they managed to make a lot of progress, and the ship was working quite well. Although there was a curious detail: that ship that they said was going to be *huge*... it wasn't so much in the end, that is, it was spacious enough for the entire herd of kong children, but not *giant* as they had proposed. Even so, it was not yet complete and there was still much to do.

At the end of the day, they always took a break, in which they talked for long periods or played different group games. Diddy and Dixie also took that time to interact with the other children, and they hadn't done badly at all; they felt like they were in a classroom, one they had never had before and would have preferred to have before the lousy social environment they had at Kong Kollege.

The week was about to end, and everyone was on the construction site taking a break. While the rest of the children were in small groups talking, Diddy and Dixie were gathered with their four friends in a corner.

"The ship is going to look incredible," Melvyn said with excitement. "I want to see it ready!"

"By the way, we were thinking we could meet here tonight," Ricky suggested to the group.

"To continue with the ship?!" Diddy and Dixie asked, surprised.

"No, of course not," Ricky replied with a laugh. "I mean just hanging around together, you know: like at a party or meeting, to share everybody and so on. To relax after so much work."

"I think it's great. Will it be with everyone else here?" Diddy asked, pointing to the other kong children.

"Absolutely," replied Mandy. "And we'll also play and eat a lot of candies."

"Come early to make the sweets, by the way," Jenny added. "What do you think, friends?"

"Sounds fun!" Dixie exclaimed with excitement. "So, we'll come tonight."

The group of six continued to chat and take their break until later. That day they hadn't worked so much, since they had decided to take it easy.

"Well, I think we should continue," Ricky said, standing up. "We just need to clean up this place a bit; there is a lot of garbage."

The rest of the group got up again, and headed towards the construction zone. As they had mentioned, there was enough waste in the place, product of the whole week of work, so they set out to collect everything to leave it clearer. Diddy and Dixie were picking up the trash on the side of the boat while thinking about the whole week they had.

"I can't believe we've come that far," Diddy said as he picked up some trash. "We're barely a week in, and the ship is already taking shape."

"I think we will have to talk to Mr. Pinky," Dixie added, before looking in one direction. "I'll pick up that debris from there."

"Okay," Diddy replied as he picked up some things and piled them into a corner.

Dixie retreated and headed towards the bow area of the ship, while Diddy continued with what he was doing in the same place. Suddenly, he felt someone call him by touching his shoulder, to which he turned to look.

"Hey, Diddy," Jenny appeared, a wooden box in her hands. "Can you come and help me with something?"

"Uhh, on what thing?" Diddy asked, looking at her with some suspicion.

"We're making some boxes with flowers, but we need to tie those same vines to them and I wanted to know if you could help get them down," she finished with a smile.

"Okay, but... can it be later? Just now I was cleaning up around here."

"It'll be quick, don't worry," she said, taking his arm and giving him a pleading look. "*Please.*"

"Uhh, well, if you say it's fast, so..." replied Diddy with a shrug.

Diddy then agreed to accompany Jenny. Truth be told, he was hesitant to go and help her, but out of courtesy, he did it anyway, like when any of his friends asked him for help. However, he also had a suspicious look towards her, since during that week... Jenny had been behaving somewhat unusually with him, and that was seeming weird to him.

Upon arriving at the site, Diddy climbed the trees again to get those vines that his friends always required. This time, he only took a few and quickly got them down.

"Now, we just have to tie them up," Jenny said, taking the vines, before giving Diddy a touch in the face in a playful way. "You're so cute, Diddy, thank you."

Diddy just remained serious about those gestures, and then Jenny started taking a few vines and wrapping them around the wooden box; truth be told, such a thing had nothing to do with the construction of the ship, so Diddy assumed that she had only invented it as an excuse to call him.

Then, at a time when she wasn't seeing him, Diddy turned around and tried to leave, but not before Jenny grabbed his arm.

"Wait, Diddy!" she said, holding him. "It still needs to adjust these vines a little more."

"Oh, but what are we going to use this on the ship for?" Diddy asked, looking at her seriously.

"They're for decoration," Jenny replied, giving him a look of pleading. "Come on, it's fast."

Diddy continued to look at her seriously, but as if for her not to keep insisting, he shrugged and agreed to give her one last help. He joined in tying knots in the box, which Jenny claimed was decorative. Suddenly, when Diddy was about to finish, he felt some arms wrap around him.

"Oh, you're so cute with me, Diddy," Jenny said as she was hugging him.

Diddy looked at her with more strangeness immediately, and then drifted away until he got away from her, only to run away afterwards.

"Hey, wait, Diddy!" Jenny said to him, going to catch up with him, while he was starting to run, until she reached to take his arm again. "There was still more to do."

"Uh, no, no, Jenny," Diddy said, getting loose and looking at her with a forced smile. "Ugh, I mean, why don't we set up that box where the boat is?"

"And for what?" Jenny said with a look of strangeness. "Just here we can finish it. Come," she added, giving him a little push and a little laugh.

"No!" Diddy exclaimed, trying to keep walking. "Let's go there... And why do you act so weird with me? What's wrong with you?"

"What? What are you talking about?" Jenny asked, looking confused, but then smiled again. "Ohh, hey, I just told you that you were very good with me, that you are a good monkey and a good friend, I didn't say anything bad. And come on; we still need to finish this."

"Hey! They're taking the box away!" Diddy exclaimed, pointing behind her.

Jenny turned to look immediately, but that box was still in the same place. Suddenly, Diddy had rushed off, leaving Jenny with no chance to catch him up this time.

Later, Diddy went back to where the construction of the ship was, somewhat tired, and then continued with the work in which he was on, picking up waste. When he was finishing, he noticed in the distance that Jenny was coming... and she was heading in his same direction as if she wanted to tell him something. Diddy didn't want to deal with that matter anymore, so he pretended he hadn't seen her, as he headed towards where Dixie was picking up debris, calling her by surprise.

"Dixie, how's it going?!" Diddy said, placing a hand on her shoulder and with a forced smile. "Have you finished yet? I do."

"Uhh, yes... Of course," Dixie replied, looking at him strangely at first, but then he beckoned to her with his eyes. "And you've finished cleaning?"

"Of course," Diddy replied, smiling and elbowing her lightly. "*It's Jenny*," he added, muttering and looking askance at her.

Dixie got the signals and just went with the flow. Apparently, both already knew the key move in that situation. Diddy and Dixie turned to give a sneaky and quick look at Jenny, who then seemed to pretend like she wasn't doing anything, as she just veered away and surreptitiously disappeared from view. Then, Diddy and Dixie just shrugged, while looking at each other seriously. Although later... Dixie made a small gesture of annoyance to herself at the situation; she was starting to feel some insecurity that Jenny had been behaving that way with Diddy, because it was something she never wanted to happen. However, she didn't want to overthink anything at that moment, even if her mind played tricks on her.

Suddenly, Mandy, Ricky and Melvyn appeared in front of them, who also seemed to have finished cleaning.

"How's it going, friends?" Mandy asked them. "I think we can rest well for today."

"Is there something wrong?" Ricky asked them, looking at them strangely after seeing them both somewhat tense.

"No, why?" Diddy replied, trying to hide his latest mishap with Jenny, and giving a forced smile. "It's that we just finished cleaning the area as well."

"Oh, so, you must be tired by now," Mandy replied with a slight laugh. "Well, why don't we take a break now? Or if you want, you can go home to rest so you are better."

"Yeah, remember that we'll meet and have fun later," Melvyn said with excitement.

"That's what we were thinking, actually," Dixie replied, smiling. "So, we meet again here tonight."

"Okay, don't be late, don't forget," Ricky said in the same tone.

Chapter 45: Friendly Meeting

Night had come, so Diddy and Dixie headed back near where they were building the ship. They had agreed with their friends where they would meet in a place near that, this time to spend moments of fun and relaxation after a long week.

When they got there, all the other kids were there; the only ones missing were the two of them. The site was spacious, with some trees in between and some bonfires lit, but very cozy to meet. The four children had set up some tables made of wood and adorned with elements of nature. Diddy and Dixie had a nice feeling of being there; it had been a long time since they had such a meeting, and for a moment, they felt like they were on DK Island when the whole Kong family gathered for a weekend.

"Hi, Diddy! Hi, Dixie!" Ricky told them, arriving with the group, and then they both returned the greeting to each one. "Good thing you came."

"Hasn't everything started yet?" Dixie asked them.

"No, we're going to make candies first," Mandy replied with excitement. "We were waiting for you."

"Okay, it sounds great," Diddy said the same way.

"Well, what are you waiting for? Come with us!" Jenny said, inviting them in. "We're going to have a lot of fun."

Diddy and Dixie joined with their friends to prepare those sweets, and then they joined the rest of the children as well. The herd of kong children already looked bigger, enough to be able to have a big event.

"Do you like candies?" some of the new children asked Diddy and Dixie. "These are the best."

"Obviously," Dixie replied as they were all gathered together preparing the sweets.

"Hey, so you also know how to make these sweets," Diddy said to their four friends. "How did you learn?"

"The same as with boats," Mandy replied, smiling. "By the way, after this we'll play, what do you think?"

In the same way, the quartet of friends of Diddy and Dixie seemed to be also skilled in preparing sweets, which they made with fruits and ingredients that they could obtain from nature. With so many hands helping, they didn't have as many complications, as it wasn't a super complex procedure either. At the end, the candies were placed on the tables they had set up.

They were having a good time. Diddy and Dixie had a chance to get to know the new kong children better, even though they were somewhat multifaceted, or both also spent time with their four friends. After all, the arrival of those old friends from the quartet hadn't been so bad, as they thought that maybe they could make many more friends. Among other activities they did during the

meeting, was to play certain interactive or competitive group games, and they had a great time. At other times, they were divided into groups.

On another occasion, Dixie was with Jenny and Mandy along with the other kong girls of the herd. While on the other hand, Diddy was along with Melvyn and Ricky in the company of some of the other boys; they were gathered "only boys" and this time they had decided to make a game of random challenges.

"What will we play?" asked one of the kong boys in the herd.

"Very easy: to the challenges!" Ricky announced with excitement, taking out a pair of round bubble gums, both of different red and green color. "You see, everyone gets in a circle, then you must close your eyes while two of you hold each of these bubble gums. Then, those who have them should throw them in the direction they want, and those who grab them will be the participants: the one with the green color will be the one who proposes the challenge, and the red one will be the one who fulfills it, okay?"

"Great, I want to play!" Diddy exclaimed excitedly, and then the rest of the kids exclaimed the same.

"Well, so, let's get started," Ricky said, sitting on the ground with the rest. "Oh, yes, whoever doesn't meet the challenge will have to eat five tree leaves."

The proposed game had started. Everyone followed the rules of the game and, of course, met the challenges, among which were to climb a tree and stay upside down for a while, eat a large amount of candies until they got cloyed, imitate an animal, throw an object as far as they can, or even bolder challenges such as having some interaction with any of those present.

"Well, Melvyn, I dare you to tell one of the girls that you want to be her boyfriend," one of the other boys said to Melvyn.

"But why me?" Melvyn protested.

"Well, because you were challenged, genius," Ricky said ironically, turning the propeller of his cap. "You have to comply with it. If you want, then tell her that it was a lie."

Melvyn got up and resigned himself to the challenge: he went to one of the kong girls and told her what was proposed, but not before winning a slap from her. The rest of the participants only made a gesture of pain at the reaction. Then, Melvyn returned to the group again.

"Are you happy?" Melvyn said sarcastically and rubbing his face, before sitting down.

"Well, let's go with the next ones," Ricky said.

Melvyn and the other boy who challenged him, threw the bubblegums at other players while everyone kept their eyes closed. After a couple of challenges, it was Diddy's turn to dare one to Ricky.

"It's my turn!" Diddy exclaimed excitedly. "Okay, Ricky, I dare you to an arm-wrestle challenge," he said defiantly, extending his arm to Ricky.

"Ah, yeah? Well, let's see who wins then," Ricky replied in the same tone.

Diddy and Ricky joined hands, resting their elbows on the ground, and faced each other to see who could defeat the other. Diddy was taking him quite an advantage to the point of having Ricky's arm almost touching the ground, it was not until Ricky took more strength and managed to take Diddy's arm to the other side abruptly, thus winning the challenge.

"Wow, Ricky, you do have strength," Diddy said, rubbing his arm and laughing.

"So you can see," Ricky replied in a winning tone. "Now let's continue."

Ricky and Diddy gave their turns to other children, who had to dare more challenges. After other challenges later, it was Ricky and Diddy's turn again, but this time it was Ricky who had to dare him.

"How about a rematch?" Diddy suggested to Ricky in a mocking tone.

"Hmm... I think I have something better," Ricky said in a defiant tone and rubbing his hands together. "Well, I dare you to... go to one of the girls and... give her a kiss."

"Uhh... to Dixie, right?" Diddy asked in a tone of confusion.

"No, no, to any of the other girls," Ricky clarified, before whispering to him. "Any that *isn't* Dixie."

"W-what?!... How?" Diddy exclaimed, looking at him strangely at such a challenge, but then he just started laughing. "Hey, Ricky, you must be kidding, right?"

"No, no, I'm not kidding," Ricky reaffirmed, laughing too. "I'm really proposing that challenge to you. Come on, do it if you dare."

"Uhh... are you serious?" asked Diddy, smiling somewhat strangely. "I remind you that... I have a girlfriend."

"And? Come on, it's just a challenge," Ricky said with a shrug. "Don't worry, buddy, we won't say anything to Dixie."

"Yeah, trust on us; in these games we're all grave," Melvyn added, encouraging him as well. "Or are you afraid?"

"Dixie won't find out, don't worry," Ricky added. "We promise you she won't find out."

"Hey... did you go crazy or what?" Diddy said, looking at them now with some seriousness. "You know I can't do that."

"Oh, come on! Nothing bad will happen, Diddy," Ricky insisted, giving him a little push. "You just go to one of the girls and see which one agrees to kiss you... Don't end up like Melvyn with his challenge either."

Melvyn nudged Ricky while he laughed. Diddy just laughed again while confused; it was obvious that he wasn't going to accept such a challenge, and seemed a bit strange to him that his friends had dared it to him, although he downplayed it at first.

"So, there's no way, I'll eat the leaves," Diddy concluded, getting up toward a tree. Not before Ricky and Melvyn stopped him immediately.

"Hey, don't be a coward, buddy!" Ricky exclaimed, holding him. "Are you really going to swallow those leaves?"

"Well, yes," Diddy reaffirmed with a shrug. "I'm not going to dare that."

"Is it serious?" Ricky replied, looking at him strangely and taking his arm. "Come on, nothing will happen. Just dare."

"Hey, no, no, I couldn't," Diddy repeated.

"Or you know what? I'll call one of the girls," Melvyn said before leaving and heading to a group of girls.

"S-say what?!" Diddy exclaimed, becoming more confused. "Hey, no, I said no!"

Seconds later, Melvyn returned with about three kong girls and explained such a challenge to them, while Diddy was just starting to want to withdraw from the game because of the way his friends were going about it.

"Well, girls, who would want a kiss from Diddy?" Melvyn suggested the girls. "The one who dares to do it will win a lot of chocolates for five whole days."

"*I want to!*" exclaimed the girls showing a determined attitude as they made their way towards Diddy.

"*W-what?! No, no, no!*" Diddy exclaimed, alarmed to see how things were going.

Diddy didn't think about it for another second and tried to flee the group, but not before Ricky stopped him and held him by one arm and then Melvyn joined in holding him on the other.

"Hey, no, no, really, no!" Diddy pleaded as he tried to escape. "I told you I don't want to!"

"Hey, it's just going to be a kiss," Ricky said, holding him and laughing at the same time. "Don't be boring."

"Yeah, there will be nothing wrong with it," Melvyn added in the same way. "Look, we're all playing."

"But I don't want to play like that!" Diddy replied.

Ricky and Melvyn held Diddy tightly, while he struggled to get out. At the same time, the kong girls were approaching Diddy competing for which one managed to kiss him, but Diddy only dodged them, while Ricky and Melvyn pushed him to do so.

"Hey, seriously, leave me!" exclaimed Diddy, dodging and trying to let go, but they wouldn't let him. "*Please, no!*"

"Ugh, Diddy!" Ricky replied holding him along with Melvyn. "We won't say anything to Dixie, don't be a coward with girls."

The rest of the kong children, as if that were not enough, also joined to push and encourage Diddy to dare such a challenge. Suddenly, Diddy was already starting to lose patience and seeing that the matter was getting heavy.

"Hey, no, leave me!" exclaimed Diddy, struggling to free himself and starting to get upset. "Hey! I'm serious!"

"Oh, don't be a killjoy, Diddy!" replied Ricky, taking him tightly. "It's just a simple game!"

"Just let one of the girls kiss you!" added Melvyn.

Diddy continued to struggle to untie himself, but the boys gave up on wanting to let him go, which was already starting to annoy him enough.

"NO, NO! Stop! Leave me alone! What's wrong with you?!" Diddy exclaimed, raising his voice and pushing Ricky and Melvyn away once for all. "Understand, I can't and don't want to do that."

Suddenly, all the struggle had been planted, and the kong children, especially Ricky and Melvyn, looked with quite weirdness at Diddy after he raised his voice to them.

"Hey... don't you like girls?!" Melvyn exclaimed, his hands on his sides.

"But I don't want to!" Diddy replied. "I mean, it's not to be a killjoy with the game, but I don't go to that limit either."

"Oh, please, Diddy! There's nothing wrong!" Ricky exclaimed, starting to raise his voice as well. "You just have to kiss one of the girls... Aren't you a real monkey?!"

"And what does that have to do with it?!" Diddy contradicted, shocked at the attitude of his friends at the moment. "You know well that I can't! I don't want to do that to Dixie!"

Ricky and Melvyn stared at him strangely for a few seconds, until suddenly... they began to laugh a little, which earned another expression of some disgust on Diddy's part.

"Oh, Diddy, aren't you really going to comply with a simple challenge just to be *loyal* to your girl?!" Ricky said, emphasizing and laughing along with Melvyn.

"And that's not obvious?!" Diddy replied.

"Hey, are you serious, Diddy?!" Melvyn said as they continued to laugh.

Diddy looked at them strangely, while also starting to get annoyed with the two of them for the way they were talking to him.

"See, brother, we won't say anything to Dixie; we're your friends," Ricky said with a laugh. "And let me tell you one thing: maybe you're hopelessly in love now, but don't lock yourself in a single world; Dixie may one day do the same and worse to you. Girls are liars and may even have you only as a choice."

"Hey, what's wrong with you?! Dixie is not like that!" Diddy exclaimed, now furious at what he had just said. "And I'm not going to comply with that silly challenge! Just give me the leaves and-"

"Oh, come on, Diddy! No more cowardice!" Melvyn interrupted. "Don't be a coward! Just kiss one of the girls, and that's it!"

"And what if I don't want TO?!" Diddy countered with exhausted patience.

"But just do it, Diddy!" Melvyn replied. "You shouldn't worry about Dixie; we're not going to tell her! This is just a game!"

"But I don't want to, that's all!" replied Diddy.

"Oh, but don't be boring, Diddy!" exclaimed Ricky looking at him with disgust and also without patience. "Not all your life you'll be falling for one girl; someday you'll like many more! Can't you just kiss another girl just because you *think you'll look bad on your girlfriend?!...* Hmm, it looks like you're a... cowardly butterfly!"

All the participants in the game, including the three girls who arrived, murmured in a tone of uproar at Ricky's words towards Diddy. Ricky and Melvyn looked at Diddy with disappointment, while he was too shocked with that attitude never before seen in his two friends; he was also angry, about to yell at them... until later, he changed his face little by little until he emitted a few small laughs.

"Do you know something?... *You make me laugh,*" Diddy told the two in a calm tone and with a mocking smile. "Are either of you carrying a coin right now?"

"Huh? And what does that have to do with here?" Ricky asked in confusion. "Why would we need a coin?"

"So you can buy the opinion that I did NOT ask you for about Dixie and me!" Diddy exclaimed, raising his voice again.

The others murmured again, this time louder, while Ricky and Melvyn were showing faces of having been silenced. Suddenly, Ricky took the bubblegum he had from the game and threw it at Diddy's face. Diddy made a gesture of pain when he received the hit, so he immediately took the bubblegum he had and the one thrown at him, and then threw them at Ricky and Melvyn in the face, respectively. The rest murmured louder and louder with each hit.

Diddy continued to look at them angrily and strangely, because he never intended to have such an argument with his friends, so he just wondered what had happened to them.

"Okay," said Ricky, defeated, rolling his eyes along with Melvyn. "You can eat the leaves if you want."

"I don't want to anymore; you better eat all the leaves of the tree yourselves!" replied Diddy very angrily before leaving.

Diddy just withdrew from the game and also from the group, while Ricky and Melvyn looked at him with mocking and weird gestures. The rest of those present there, only murmured and were tense at the sudden scene of scandal that had happened in a few minutes.

On the other hand, at the same time there was Dixie along with the girls, Jenny and Mandy, in addition to the other kong girls. They were all sharing their girl things in a quiet and friendly atmosphere. Until later, they decided to do a group game as well.

"And how do you play this?" Dixie asked curiously after they had proposed it.

"It's very easy, you'll see," Jenny replied as she placed a banana in the center of the group. "We all get in a round. Oh, and you'll *have to play too*, Dixie."

"Ah, I see, will we play the challenges?" Dixie asked them, smiling. "Sounds fun!"

"Yes, something like that... but this one is much *more fun*," Mandy replied excitedly before getting up. "I'll be right back, wait here."

Mandy left for a moment from the group and, when she returned, a group of kong boys came with her, who were also integrated into the group and joined the game. They all got on the round among all the girls as if they were also to participate."

"Wait a minute, weren't we going to play just girls?" Dixie asked Jenny and Mandy in a confused and low voice.

"We need boys for this game too," Jenny replied in a defiant tone. "You just watch."

Dixie was somewhat confused by the game and made a gesture of strangeness, although she downplayed it afterwards and only shrugged. The girls then spun the banana in the center of the round and, when it stopped, pointed side and side to one of the boys and one of the girls.

"Well, you're the ones who will play," Jenny said to the two designated participants. "So, you two will have to kiss."

"What?!" Dixie exclaimed quietly, making another gesture of surprise.

Both kids who had been pointed out, got together and, as if they had no problem, kissed without further ado, earning a few murmurs of astonishment from the rest of the group.

"And that's how it's played," Mandy whispered to Dixie with excitement. "This game is fun!"

Then, they spun the banana again, stopping after a few seconds to end up pointing to two more participants, who without having any problem, met the rule of the game that was to kiss each other on the lips. Dixie was a little amused by the game, but obviously knew that she couldn't dare such a challenge if she had to participate, so, trying not to let the girls notice, she began to get up and withdraw from the group.

"Hey, Dixie! Where are you going?" Jenny said, holding her arm along with Mandy and pulling her back into the round. "Stay playing with us."

"Hey... I don't want to play *this*," Dixie whispered.

"Don't worry, just have fun," Jenny added with small laughs and giving her a little push.

"No, no, not to this," Dixie replied, getting loose. "I'm sorry."

"Come on, it's not a bad game," Mandy said, taking her arm again. "We are also participating."

The group spun the banana a few more times. All those who were singled out complied with the rules of the game as if nothing happened. Dixie remained watching the entire game while showing a forced smile; as the game progressed, she was again trying to get out of there... It wasn't until the banana turned once more and, this time, pointed to her and one of the boys.

"Wow, but look who it's her turn to kiss now!" Mandy commented in a malicious tone looking at Dixie.

"No, no, no! Wait a minute!" Dixie replied immediately opposed. "I can't do this."

"Oh, why?" Mandy asked, looking at her strangely. "We're just playing."

"Because no, I'm not going to play this," Dixie replied.

"Oh, come on, Dixie! It's just a kiss," Jenny insisted, giving her a little push. "There will be nothing wrong with it."

"B-but... I have a boyfriend!" Dixie exclaimed. "I wouldn't do that to Diddy."

"And is there any problem with that?" Mandy replied with a small laugh. "Don't worry, we're not going to say anything to Diddy."

"Yeah, he'll never find out," Jenny added before speaking to the designated boy. "Hey, boy, come here and kiss Dixie!"

"What?! Hey, no, I don't want to!" Dixie replied, looking confused.

Dixie immediately got up and was going to start running, but was stopped before by Jenny and Mandy, who grabbed her arms.

"Hey, no, I'm serious!" Dixie exclaimed, trying to let go, but they didn't let her. "I'm not going to play that!"

"Oh, Dixie! We won't gossip anything," Jenny replied as she held her. "Don't be boring and play!"

"No, seriously, I don't want to play this!" Dixie replied.

At the same time, the rest of the group encouraged the kong boy to kiss Dixie, and he went to her immediately, trying to approach her to kiss her, in turn Jenny and Mandy held her and pushed her to do so.

"Hey, no, no, let go of me!" pleaded Dixie in the struggle. *"I don't want to do that!"*

"Hey, we're just playing!" Jenny replied as they pushed her.

Dixie was just confused and starting to get more uncomfortable at the heavy pace the game was taking.

"Hey, no, I already said no!" exclaimed Dixie as she struggled to get out. *"Please leave me!"*

"Nothing bad will happen!" Mandy replied, holding her. "You just have to kiss the boy, and that's all!"

"But I don't want to! Don't you understand?!" replied Dixie, raising her voice more. Until at a sudden moment, she pushed them both in once move with exhausted patience. *"NO! LET GO OF ME! I already told you I don't want to play this!"*

Both Jenny and Mandy, as well as the rest of the participating kids, stood still as they looked at Dixie strangely.

"Hey, but why don't you want to?" Mandy asked, hands on her sides. "Are you boring?"

"Ugh, because obviously I can't participate in something like that!" Dixie replied in a tone of irony. "Isn't it obvious?"

"Oh, Dixie, please, it's just a game!" Jenny replied, looking at her strangely. "Almost all of us have already played, you haven't yet! Can't you give a simple kiss? Just imagine that this boy is Diddy... Or don't tell me you don't do it because 'you don't want to be disloyal to your boy'?"

"Yes, that's why!" Dixie replied, looking at them with some disgust. "Is there any problem?"

Suddenly, Jenny and Mandy looked at each other and began to laugh at that answer, something that Dixie began to annoy a lot, much more if it came from her own friends.

"Oh, Dixie, don't be silly!" said Jenny, patting her on the arm. "Being loyal to a boy is the stupidest thing you can do for him, I mean... he's a boy! They are so easy, and at any moment he'll leave you and go with girls he finds prettier than you. So, why don't you do it first?"

"Yeah, Dixie, boys are worse," Mandy added. "Stop saying pathetic nonsense and just kiss that kid!"

"Well, I don't want to, and that's all!" Dixie exclaimed in a protestant tone. "And Diddy isn't as you say!"

"Oh, that's what you think at first!" Mandy replied, shrugging and laughing a little. "You'll see that he does the same to you later! So, just kiss the boy, there will be nothing wrong in the end! Don't be silly!"

"Yeah, just do it, we won't tell Diddy, don't worry about him!" Jenny replied. "Besides, not all your life you will like only him, you'll continue to meet a lot of better boys. Don't be a *naïve dumb, Dixie!*"

The rest of the group began to murmur with shock at the whole matter that had happened. Dixie was feeling indignant at what her two friends were telling her; that attitude was never expected of them. She was so furious that she was even consumed by the urge to confront Jenny at that very moment about her supposed interest in Diddy, but she had to make the effort to keep it to her. Instead, she just remained calm and began to smile at them little by little.

"Let's see, girls, I need to ask you a question," Dixie said, calming down again and showing a smile. "Have you already seen what time it is?"

"Huh? And what does time have to do with it?" Jenny replied in confusion. "I don't even know what time it is!"

"Well, I don't know the time I asked you for your stupid opinion either!" Dixie exclaimed, earning louder murmurs from those present.

Jenny and Mandy were only furious and didn't know how to respond to her, so they quickly headed towards Dixie and, from one moment to another, pulled her two curly strands of hair. Dixie was shocked by that attitude of the two, that only increased the fury in her, so she then returned a pull of hair to both of them. With each pull, the murmurs of the rest of the kong children grew louder.

Dixie, not wanting to argue further, turned around and left. The rest of the kong children were just murmuring and getting shocked with the scandal that had just occurred. Jenny and Mandy decided

to follow Dixie until they reached her in a place with more privacy.

"Ugh, it's okay, Dixie!" exclaimed Jenny, reaching for her. "If you want, just give him the kiss on the cheek, and that's it. What do you say?"

"Don't be angry, Dixie," Mandy added. "We're your friends."

"No, I *don't* want to play anymore!" replied Dixie, turning to them, still angry. "Much less with friends who think that way about Diddy and me."

"Okay, sorry, don't get like that!" Jenny replied. "Although... what we told you is true and-"

"You tell me because you want to stay with Diddy, right?!" Dixie interrupted without being able to hold back anymore, although she later realized that she shouldn't have said that to Jenny.

"What?!" exclaimed Jenny with a look of strangeness. "*Hey, what are you talking about?!*"

Dixie didn't want to argue anymore, so she swallowed her anger and just started running and leaving them behind, to which the two of them just rolled their eyes and turned around.

On the other hand, there was Diddy sitting on a rock in a hidden corner of the area, watching among the trees the whole event that was supposed to be enjoyable, but had now been spoiled a bit by the little scandal of his friends. Even so, Diddy didn't feel like hanging around with any of them for the time being, not after the nosy attitudes they had about him. Suddenly, Diddy heard someone coming nearby.

"Diddy!" Dixie appeared walking towards him. "I didn't know you were here; did something happen?"

"You don't even know what happened," Diddy replied, rolling his eyes upon remembering it. "By the way, why are you here too?"

"Ugh... you wouldn't believe me what happened either," Dixie said in the same way, sitting next to him. "I just had a mishap with... Jenny and Mandy."

"What are you talking about?" Diddy exclaimed, turning face to face with her immediately. "Hey, something similar happened here... I also just got into a fight with the boys."

Both told the scandals they had just had with their friends... They never thought they would behave like this in such an unexpected way; they had never seen them that way and with those attitudes. Diddy and Dixie were feeling somewhat disappointed in the four of them; they always had them as excellent friends, but wanting to force them to do things they didn't want even if they were just games and meddling in their life... had made them doubt their friendship a little. Both thought that maybe they still needed to know them and who knows what other things could surprise them about that quartet, although this time... they had been given a negative impression from them.

"... and then, they told me I was a naïve dumb," Dixie said with disgust. "And then, I laughed and asked them the time, Jenny replied that she had no idea, and then I told them that I didn't know the time I asked them to comment either."

"Wow, you applied almost the same as me," Diddy said, smiling and shrugging. "I told them the same: that at no time did I ask their opinion about us."

"What happened to them?" Dixie commented with disgust. "I never expected that from them."

"I think the same; I don't know what happened to them," Diddy added in the same way, before entering a moment of silence. "They have gone crazy from one moment to the next."

"I swear they do. I never thought they would behave like that; they had never been like that."

Both continued to comment on the situation and tell more details. Then, they continued to stay in that same place, since now they had lowered their spirits to reunite with one of the kong children. Until later, they were also getting a little bored.

"Hey, I craved one of those candies," Diddy said after a while. "Don't want to go for some?"

"No, if you want, go and you can bring me some," Dixie replied. "I don't want to see the faces of them for now."

"Okay. So, I'll be right back."

Dixie stayed in the same place, while Diddy went for a few sweets that were on the tables. Obviously, he was trying not to meet any of his four friends along the way, nor to generate much attention from the other kong children, not after those sudden scandals that had been made a few minutes ago.

Upon arriving at the tables, Diddy took several different types of candies for himself and for Dixie as well. When suddenly, someone appeared next to him by surprise.

"Hey, Diddy!" Jenny said as she also took a few candies. "I haven't seen you for a while. I thought you had already left."

Diddy just smiled at her a little, but didn't speak to her this time, not after what she said to Dixie and her apparent interest in him. He tried to ignore her afterwards, though she still seemed to notice.

"Hey, why are you so quiet?" Jenny asked, elbowing him lightly and smiling at him in a flirtatious way. "*Cute monkey*," she whispered, winking and tapping his face, before leaving.

Jenny left, and Diddy just looked at her strangely at the gesture, but decided not to take much importance to it as in the whole week. He finished taking the candies he needed and started heading back to where he was with Dixie.

Diddy was walking calmly among the trees where he couldn't be spotted by the rest of the kids, when suddenly and to his bad surprise, Jenny appeared to him by surprise again.

"Ah, Diddy, but what a coincidence," Jenny said with a few small laughs as he just tried to walk faster, but she stopped him again. "Hey, wait! Where-"

"Uh, no... Thank you, Jenny, I'm sorry," Diddy replied with a forced smile.

Diddy continued walking trying to avoid her; those bold gestures that she was having with him began to annoy him, especially since she was one of his friends. When suddenly, Jenny grabbed his arm and then cornered him against one of the trees.

"*Hey!*" exclaimed Diddy. "What's up with you?!"

Diddy tried to let go immediately, but Jenny held him by the arms against the tree, causing him to drop all the candies.

"Oh, Diddy, did you know you're a cute little monkey?" she said with a smile and getting very close. "You know? I've always thought that you-"

"N-no, no, Jenny! *Wait!*" Diddy interrupted, freeing himself from her and talking to her calmly. "See, I understand your intentions... but you're just my friend, just like Mandy, Ricky and Melvyn. And also, you have to remember that *I have a girlfriend*, and it's *Dixie*... And she's *your friend* too, and it's not right for you to act like that."

"Oh, so *what?!?*" Jenny replied with a shrug. "I'm not jealous."

"And Dixie neither!" replied Diddy in a mocking tone.

Jenny was angry at that response and suddenly took him back by the arms against the tree, getting very close to him again.

"You know, Diddy?... I've never thought about stealing," she said, pulling up to his face and smiling. "But... what if I steal a kiss from you?"

"*Hey, no, what's wrong with you?!?*" Diddy exclaimed, trying to get free from her.

"Don't worry, Dixie isn't going to find out-"

"No, Jenny!" Diddy replied, turning away. "What's wrong with you?!?"

"Oh, come on," she added, grabbing his face, to which Diddy backed off and tried to dodge her. "Don't worry, if anyone finds out, I'll tell them it's my fault."

"No, Jenny! No!"

Diddy was going to start running, but Jenny pushed him back against the tree and held him to try to kiss him. Diddy dodged her face while struggling to get out.

"*Dixie, it's good that you arrived!*" Diddy exclaimed quickly, looking behind Jenny.

Jenny immediately turned and stopped exerting force against Diddy. He began to flee, but almost instantly, she lunged at him and cornered him again against another tree, this time with more force.

"Jenny! Jenny, no, please!" Diddy replied, trying to let go. "I don't see you that way!"

"Come on, it'll only be for a while, there's nothing wrong with it," she said, still smiling at him. "No one is going to find out."

"*No, Jenny, I'm serious!*" exclaimed Diddy, pushing her harder, but that seemed to infuriate her, since she pushed him against the tree with more brusqueness.

"You're not leaving here until you kiss me!... *Or I'll tell everyone that you're chasing me,*" Jenny whispered, threatening him with a stare and her face very close.

"*HUH?! But what... does... this mean?!?*" a known voice exclaimed suddenly.

Diddy and Jenny turned to look at who it was and could observe the faces of Ricky, Mandy and Melvyn gaping as if they had seen a ghost, seeing them both in that situation and so close. The three of them began to make gestures and emit small yells of impression.

"*No, no, no!*" Diddy hurriedly exclaimed. "It's not what you think! Jenny came and then-"

"I can't believe this!" interrupted Melvyn, not recovering from the shock. "*I never expected it!*"

"Ahh, I see!" Ricky added with a mischievous tone. "So you finally decided to comply with the challenge and chose Jenny, right, Diddy?!"

"Wow, Jenny!" Mandy said, all shocked. "I didn't know you liked other girl's boyfriends!"

"*NO! ENOUGH IS ENOUGH!*" Diddy protested, walking towards them. "It wasn't so; Jenny came and-"

"Poor Dixie when she'll know this!" Ricky interrupted Diddy.

"Well, we warned her and she didn't want to listen to us!" Mandy added with a shrug.

Diddy tried to explain the situation, but at the same time, the three of them just kept making comments and being shocked at what they had just witnessed. They made so much noise that suddenly, the other kong children present at the event began to arrive, until later a crowd was assembled. Diddy was getting desperate, and all he did was try to flee again, but there was already a big crowd around and, wherever he went, they followed him and surrounded him to ask him what had happened. Everyone began to murmur, ask and even rumor about what had happened. Diddy just wanted to teleport away from there at that very moment.

"What happened what?!" some of them asked in the crowd, which reached Diddy's ears. "What are you saying?! Diddy was cheating on Dixie with Jenny?!"

"*What?! Hey, no, that's not true!*" Diddy exclaimed, insistently, but they ignored his statement.

"Why did you do that to Dixie?!" protested one of the kong children in the crowd.

"*I didn't do anything!*" replied Diddy, imposing his stance.

"*Hey! Here's Dixie!*" said another of the children in the crowd.

Diddy turned to look and there was Dixie arriving among all the crowd. She was all confused without knowing why there was so much fuss.

"But what's going on here?!" Dixie asked among the crowd.

"*Dixie!*" Diddy exclaimed, heading quickly toward her. "*Dixie, you have to believe me, I know you will!* When I was returning with the candies, Jenny appeared in front of me and-"

"*He was cheating on you with Jenny, Dixie!*" interrupted one of the children in the crowd.

"*They were kissing under that tree!*" added another, pointing to the corner.

"*Nooo! That's not how it was!*" protested Diddy.

The herd of kongs began to speak louder and continued to make noise attacking Diddy and defending Dixie. Diddy had already lost patience. Even so, Dixie was trying to calm down and analyze everything that had happened, until little by little she was also losing her patience due to the fuss they were making.

"HEY! CALM DOWN! SILENCE, PLEASE!" Dixie shouted hard.

Everyone toned down instantly as they kept looking at them sideways in amazement and emitting small murmurs.

"Now yes," Diddy said to Dixie when he could finally explain it more calmly. "The matter is, when I was coming back, Jenny appeared, pushed me hard against a tree and tried to kiss me, then the other three arrived and misunderstood it, that's all."

Instantly, Dixie cast a look of annoyance at Jenny in the distance, even feeling like going to confront. Even so, she no longer wanted to argue at that time, much less after a riotous agglomeration had formed because of it, and neither of the two of them wanted to get involved in a public scandal.

"Let's get out of here," Dixie whispered to Diddy before trying to get out from the crowd as they looked sideways.

"Wait, wait a minute!" interrupted Jenny, coming to the front with the group. "I have to clarify one thing: *it was Diddy* who came to me!"

The crowd again uttered loud murmurs and became aware of the situation, while Diddy and Dixie were shocked at it.

"WHAT?! Hey, don't lie, that wasn't like that!" Diddy replied, returning in front of them along with Dixie.

"Don't pretend to be crazy, Diddy! You were who insisted on me!" Jenny countered by cynically blaming him. "You are always who chases me!"

"Hey, what's wrong with you, Jenny?!" Diddy added, indignant at the false accusation. *"I didn't even want to find you!"*

"Well, we really did see you, Diddy!" said Ricky, blaming him too. "We found you *with* Jenny!"

"And yes, Dixie, we saw your boyfriend with Jenny!" Mandy added. "Do you see that we were not wrong to tell you that Diddy would be like that?!"

"Hey, what are you saying?! I didn't do anything!" replied Diddy to them, annoyed. *"What's happening to you?!"*

"But you were there with Jenny!" added Melvyn. "We saw you *so close* with her!"

"No, she was the one who was pushing me!" replied Diddy. "Jenny was chasing me!"

"What are you talking about?!" Jenny replied furiously. "It was you! You were trying to kiss me!"

"That WASN'T so!" shouted Diddy trying to defend his position.

Diddy and Dixie along with the quartet began to argue, while the rest of the kongs murmured and made gestures of wanting more from the scandal. Everyone emitted louder shouts as both groups made each comment.

"Wait a minute, please!" Dixie interrupted firmly. "Take this however you will, but *you, Jenny*, are the one who is lying!"

"Me?! You're crazy!" Jenny replied with her arms crossed. "And don't tell me you believe your boyfriend!"

"Well, yes! And besides, *I've* noticed that sometimes you act strangely with him or try to get close to him!" Dixie confessed. "So that's why I can believe him!"

The four of them, especially Jenny and Mandy, and trying to avoid it at first, began to laugh cheekily at Dixie. Meanwhile, the rest of the children were tense and wanting more of the situation.

"Oh, Dixie!" said Mandy, finishing laughing. "Do you really believe that to *a boy!*?"

"What you say is your speculation, Dixie!" Jenny added in a mocking tone. "You must be *crazy!* I bet even Diddy hasn't thought that and you just make up fallacies about me!"

"It's not a fallacy!" Dixie replied. "I have seen it with my own eyes! Don't be a liar, Jenny!"

"Yeah, yeah, say whatever you want!" replied Jenny in a mocking tone. *"Liar you!"*

"Hey, *wait a minute!*" interrupted Diddy, joining in the defensive, before pointing at the four of them. "For your information: I *have* noticed Jenny's intentions and I have *always* told Dixie about it! So, *Dixie is not crazy!*"

The crowd emitted louder shouts of tension, while the quartet only showed themselves not knowing what else to say and with faces of defeat after what Diddy and Dixie said. Suddenly, Jenny was furious and went to pounce on Dixie as if trying to start a confrontation.

"HEY! What's wrong with you?!" Dixie exclaimed, stopping and pushing her away.

"Well, you want to fight, right?! So, let's do it!" replied Jenny trying to grab her hair.

"At no moment did I say I wanted to fight you, Jenny!" said Dixie, defending herself.

Jenny pulled Dixie's hair, while she only tried to defend herself by pushing her arms away, until seconds later, she returned a single pull of Jenny's hair in defense. Suddenly, Mandy also joined in and pulled Dixie's hair.

"What's wrong with you?!" exclaimed Mandy, coming out on the defensive. *"Don't pull Jenny's hair!"*

"But she started!" replied Dixie.

Jenny and Mandy began to confront Dixie with hair pulls, while she only defended herself or returned the pulls to the point of removing their hair ribbons. At the same time, the crowd murmured loudly. Suddenly, Diddy intervened in the confrontation and tried to separate the girls, for which he only took Dixie and tried to push Jenny and Mandy away.

"Hey, leave her!" said Diddy to the two, trying to push them away. "What's happening to you today?!"

"Hey, don't mess with Jenny and Mandy, huh!" Ricky headed with Melvyn to start a fight with Diddy too.

"But I just pushed them away, I never hurt them!" replied Diddy.

Ricky and Melvyn lunged at Diddy and began confronting him. With that, Jenny and Mandy confronted Dixie again. Meanwhile, the rest of the kong kids were just making a fuss to see who would fight better, although truth be told, Diddy and Dixie were only making defensive moves in a fight that neither of them had intended to start and only wondered what was wrong with their four friends that day.

At one point in the fight, Diddy was stopping an attack by Ricky by holding his arm and then struggling in defense, as in the arm-wrestling game. Seconds later, Diddy made a bad move and, by accident, cracked Ricky's arm, earning loud screams of pain from the crowd. Ricky screamed so loudly, and instantly, the six stopped the fight in its tracks.

"Oh, I'm sorry, Ricky!" Diddy exclaimed, alarmed. "S-sorry, I didn't want to--"

"Let me! This is your fault!" interrupted Ricky giving Diddy a push with his other arm and complaining of the pain.

Ricky's arm looked as if he had gotten hurt considerably, as he didn't seem to want to let go and was in pain. Everyone looked at the scene in horror, and Diddy couldn't help but feel guilty even though the fight was started by the four of them.

"Truly, I'm sorry, Ricky!" Diddy said with pity. "If you want, we help you and we go to the medicine ape and--"

"MEDICINE APE EITHER ANYTHING!" Jenny interrupted, yelling at them.

"You seriously went overboard, Diddy!" Melvyn shouted, pushing Diddy.

"Ah, but I remind you that YOU wanted to fight!" Dixie replied defensively. *"We only told you things like they are!"*

"That's true!" Diddy added earnestly. *"You did not agree to end this discussion and only responded by attacking!"*

"SO, GET OUT OF HERE!" the four of them yelled, pushing them out of the crowd.

"WELL, WELL, SO, GOODBYE!" yelled Diddy.

Diddy and Dixie without further ado, left the place completely, obviously very angry with the four for all the scandal they had made at them, while they continued to make mocking faces, and the two of them returned them from a distance. The rest of the kongs continued to murmur and be shocked after all the drama with which the event had ended, which had now been completely ruined, but at the same time left something to talk about.

Chapter 46: Apologies

The next day was another day to continue with the construction of that ship. But this time, Diddy and Dixie decided not to go... Not after all the public scandal they had been involved in the day before. They knew that returning to the site would be to gain the spotlight of everyone present... and not in such a good way. They didn't even want to see their friends; in actual fact, they were very disappointed in them and had never met them that way; they never imagined that they would act like that on both of them.

It was late in the afternoon, and the pair of kongs were on the floor of their room playing the two alone to a board game that Mr. Pinky had lent them.

"Ha! I beat you!" Diddy exclaimed in a winning tone as he moved his last token. "You have no more moves to make."

"Are you sure?" Dixie said with a mocking smile before moving another tile and completing the game. "Now tell me again!"

Diddy gawked at Dixie's play, while now she laughed victoriously. Suddenly, the door was knocked and they both got up to open it, it was Mr. Pinky.

"Yeah? What's up, Mr. Pinky?" Diddy asked.

"Uh, your four little friends have come," replied the teacher. "They're down there waiting for you; they say they want to talk to you."

Diddy and Dixie froze and were serious when they heard that, which Mr. Pinky noticed and assumed that something was not very right.

"What? Did something happen?" asked the teacher looking at them strangely.

"Uhh... no, it's okay," Dixie replied with a forced smile. "Tell them that in a while we'll go down."

Mr. Pinky left and closed the door and then went to talk to the group. Meanwhile, Diddy and Dixie looked at each other not knowing what to do now. Diddy went out of the bedroom window for a while, and tried to peek out of one of the branches of the tree in the house to look stealthy at the floor... Indeed, there was the quartet of their friends down there. Diddy immediately returned to the room.

"Yes... it's them," Diddy whispered to Dixie, rolling his eyes.

"And now what do we do?" Dixie asked the same way. "I don't want to see or talk to them."

"Me neither, and I have no idea what they came for."

Both were not in the mood to see them nor did they have any choice, but at the same time they were curious, so they decided to go down to see them anyway.

When they came down from the house, they saw the kong children again. Both of them were hesitant to take the last steps of the ladder, and then look at the four of them. These were also

shown with faces of not knowing how to react, and avoided having prolonged eye contact with the two. Diddy and Dixie headed towards them without showing them any expression of excitement as they usually did normally.

"Hello," Diddy and Dixie said coldly and all serious.

"Uhh... hi?" answered the four simultaneously and with forced smiles.

There was an awkward moment of silence, as neither group knew how to speak. The four kids looked everywhere and then looked at them both not knowing what to say to them, while the pair just looked up at them and made small gestures of curiosity to get them to talk.

"Excuse us!" Melvyn said quickly before there was another moment of silence.

"Uhh... hey..." Mandy said with some embarrassment and hesitation to look at them. "It's that we wanted to tell you that... we're really... *sorry*. We haven't seen you all day and... we assumed you were mad at us, so we decided to come and see you and... we wanted to apologize if we gave you a bad time last night."

"Yeah... we were just coming to apologize," Jenny added likewise. "And especially me... Sorry if I was very intrusive with you."

"We really want you to excuse us," Ricky added with a lowered look. "We don't want you to get mad at us, you're our friends, so... if you have something to tell us, do it. Oh, and don't worry about my arm, we've already gone to that medicine ape," he added, showing them his healed arm.

Diddy and Dixie remained silent for a few seconds after hearing all that. They were really still upset with them, but they also saw that this would be an appropriate time to explain everything to them more calmly.

"Hey, you'll see..." Diddy said with a sigh. "Yes, we did get mad at you... and *a lot*. Last night you didn't want to listen to us but I hope you do now... There were certain things that annoyed us, for example: when we were playing the challenges, that is: *it was just a game*, and I had no problem eating the leaves, but you were already *forcing* me to do something that I *did not* want to do, and besides... you started badmouthing Dixie and me, when that wasn't relevant."

"And the same for you girls," Dixie continued towards Jenny and Mandy seriously. "I also told you that I would not play that game, but you wanted to force me anyway, and besides that, you started to comment on Diddy and me, that is... you *were meddling in our lives*. And besides, did you want to fight me? Whereas I never had that intention nor did I expect you to treat me like that, much less for a simple game."

"And another thing, this is about you, Jenny," Diddy added to her. "It's not right what you intended with me, you know well about Dixie and me. Besides, you're our friend and it looks so bad that you want to do that. I explained it to you last night calmly, but you just kept insisting on me, so that later you came to say in front of the rest that the insistent was me?"

"And what bothered us the most was all the fuss you made us go through in front of everyone," Dixie added. "We were about to leave and not argue with you in public, but then Jenny came out to continue the scandal more. And the worst part is that we just answered you how things were, but you guys started fighting with us when we didn't even have that intention, starting with Jenny, I wasn't even thinking about fighting her. Seriously... we never expect all that from you."

"We even intended to help Ricky with his arm," Diddy continued. "But... you just started yelling at us and kicking us out."

The quartet remained silent, showing themselves as if they had been told all the truths, but, at the same time, as if it was difficult for them to accept them at first.

"Uhh... Okay... We behave very badly with you," Ricky admitted, looking embarrassed. "See... we in the case of Diddy, we just wanted to have fun and that he also had fun and tried if he dared, but... I think we also went over the line and... I know it was wrong. So, listen to us, Diddy... we really apologize for how we treated you, we promise it won't happen again."

"And you too, Dixie... we want you to apologize," Mandy added in kind. "Sorry if we treat you that way... We just wanted you to play like us too, we wanted you to have fun too, but... forgive us if you felt obligated and, above all, if we made you feel bad."

"And I... I also want you two to forgive me," Jenny told them with a low look. "And yes, I've been trying to get an approach with Diddy, I know... that was wrong. Excuse me if I was very rude to you, Diddy... and excuse me too, Dixie, sorry if you came to feel bad because of me..."

"And most of all, sorry for last night's scandal," Melvyn continued. "We thought that Diddy was really with Jenny or something, and that's why we were surprised and all the fuss started. Forgive us if we embarrassed you in front of everyone and responded by attacking you."

"Please forgive us!" Ricky pleaded, clasping his hands and pleading. "You have been very good friends with us and we failed you, we are stupid, we know it... But we want to make peace with you... And we'll continue with our ship too; look we're doing that for you."

Diddy and Dixie sighed and continued to be serious; they didn't feel so sure yet that they could accept their apology, especially Diddy, since he had had something similar before with his bad schoolmates, who also used to force him to do things he didn't want to do and trampled on him for that... Although at least, this new group of children had had the courage to apologize to them and they were not bad children either.

Dixie, on the other hand, was trying to beckon Jenny to come talk to her privately, to which she looked at her with some insecurity, but Dixie continued to beckon her to agree. So, both went to another corner, while Diddy stayed with the other three trying to reach an agreement.

Dixie and Jenny stopped near the staircase of the house so they could talk. Dixie was gathering courage and strength to be able to talk to her friend about the events that had occurred that week.

"Dixie, I... I'm really sorry," Jenny said, looking embarrassed at Dixie. "Sorry for having been like that."

"I know, Jenny... and don't worry, I don't want to fight with you if that's what you think," Dixie replied, smiling a little, before hesitating a sigh and looking at her with some insecurity. "Just tell me one thing, and I would like you to be honest with me: you... you like Diddy, right?"

Jenny looked at her quietly for a few seconds, which made Dixie already guess the answer.

"Well... what could I tell you?... Actually, yes," Jenny replied, somewhat embarrassed. "Since always, since we met you two and I saw him... But I didn't know at first that you two were dating. I'm sorry..."

Dixie felt a little inner punch upon hearing that, but tried to be strong. She also began to feel some pity for Jenny; she didn't want to hurt her feelings, she really didn't want to have any rivalry or antagonize her because of it. But even so, she wanted to clarify certain things for her.

"See, Jenny, I think I can understand what you're feeling. But... you know that Diddy and I love each other, that is, I really love him very much and so does he to me... So... I wish you *could understand* that too. And really, I was quite annoyed by the way you've been approaching him these days, and he also says he feels uncomfortable when you treat him like that. So... I would just like to ask you to please don't do it... And I don't blame you for liking him; Diddy is a very cute monkey, and his way of being is much more... But it's not right how you try to approach him. This is for the good of both of us and also for *your own good*; don't hurt yourself either."

"I know... And excuse me, please, okay?" Jenny replied with a low look. "And I'm also sorry I wanted to fight you yesterday... It's just that I was upset about that: I couldn't stand to see the two of you together and how you defended each other, but... I know, Diddy is *your* boyfriend, and I just saw that he really loves and respects you; it was just me who tried to intervene between you. But... okay, I promise it won't happen again. I just want you to forgive me, please."

"Okay, Jenny," Dixie said, smiling and placing a hand on her shoulder. "Just one thing: I just hope your apology is true, okay? I have considered you a lot, you're my friend, and the last thing I want is to fight with you for this."

"Wow, Dixie... you're so kind with me," Jenny said, smiling somewhat embarrassedly. "Oh, I don't deserve a friend like you; you've been so good with me and I just failed you trying to steal your boyfriend and wanting to fight with you. I'm an idiot."

"No, don't say that, Jenny," Dixie replied, laughing and calming her down. "I really forgive you, but as I said: I hope you are also apologizing seriously. And also... I don't want you to feel bad because of us; you're very pretty, and I know that one day you could also find someone who loves you very much... And if you don't find it, you can still be very happy."

"Oh... I thank you, Dixie," Jenny said, smiling. "Thank you for understanding me... You're really a good friend, and now I just want us to stay this way... And yes, I promise I won't do that to Diddy anymore, don't worry about me... Can I give you a hug?" she added, extending both arms to Dixie.

"Okay, Jenny," she replied, smiling back.

The two girls finally hugged each other. Apparently, they had clarified things and that made Dixie feel very good; she even didn't feel anything bad towards her anymore. Still, as she mentioned, she just wanted to think that Jenny really understood and her apologies were sincere. After all the conversation, the two decided to return again to the others.

"Hey, Dixie, do you still have the bracelet I gave you?" Jenny asked her on the way.

"Uhh... You see, the truth is that it got damaged," Dixie replied somewhat embarrassed.

"Oh, don't worry, I'll make you another one, okay?" Jenny said, smiling.

They arrived again where the others, where apparently, an agreement had also been reached. Likewise, Diddy hoped that everyone was really apologizing; after all, they were their friends, with whom they had had good times and had made their days on Hurricane Island.

"So... are we good friends again?" Ricky asked them with a smile.

"Yes... But you already know, I don't want any of this to happen again, okay?" Diddy replied in the same way.

"Okay, friends," Mandy said.

"Why don't we all give each other a group hug?" Melvyn exclaimed with excitement.

The six nodded and smiled calmly. After that, everyone gave each other a hug as a sign of apology and peace. Then, they separated after a few seconds.

"We promise not to fight again, okay?" Ricky said, smiling.

"Okay!" they all exclaimed happily, before bumping their hands together. "For our friendship!"

"So... will you return tomorrow to continue with the ship?" Mandy asked them both.

"Of course!" Diddy and Dixie replied.

Diddy and Dixie were back in their room. They both continued their board game and at the same time talked about their four friends. They had finally fixed the little unexpected discord they had had with them, although... Diddy still had some doubts.

"You don't beat me this time!" said Dixie, challenging Diddy after moving a token of the game. But then, she noticed a low expression on him. "Uhh... is something wrong?"

"It's that... I really don't know if it was a good idea to forgive them," Diddy admitted with some insecurity.

"Why do you say it?" Dixie asked him in confusion.

"I don't know what you'll think, but I think that... maybe they can behave like that with us again at any time."

"I don't think so, I mean, we already explained everything that bothered us... That is already up to them whether they do it again or not."

"For that very reason: what if they do it again?" Diddy questioned. "Sorry if I still continue with the topic, but the way they talked about us only makes me think... if that's how they have thought for all the time we've been knowing them. And regarding Jenny, I don't know what you think, but I don't think she's going to change, just look at how she's behaved... And it's almost obvious that the others will take her side."

"Yes, I know. But I don't think that's why we have to throw away our friendship so quickly with them now; we can still try to give them another chance... Of course, if some of those things are repeated again, then we would have to reconsider. But for now, we'll only have to wait to see how they behave next time... I know they'll do well; I hope so."

"I want to think that too," Diddy replied, not so sure and shrugging as he continued with the game.

Then, there was a knock on the door, so they got up to open it. It was Mr. Pinky again.

"Kids, I have something to inform you," Mr. Pinky announced. "By the way, if you want, we can start with the fruitcake you wanted to eat today."

"Uh, yes, Mr. Pinky... In a while we went up," Diddy replied in a muted tone along with Dixie.

"Is something wrong?" asked the teacher, raising eyebrows when he noticed them that way.

"No... Why?" Dixie replied with a forced smile.

"Uhh... Excuse me if I'm wrong, but by chance... is everything okay with your friends?" the teacher speculated. "I saw the same face in you when I told you that they came."

Both Diddy and Dixie looked down at the question, in which Mr. Pinky could notice the clear affirmative answer.

"Well... we actually did have a mishap with them," Diddy replied after sighing.

Minutes later, Mr. Pinky was in the kitchen of his house along with Diddy and Dixie. They had planned to make a fruitcake, since every weekend the three of them used to make some special dish. While they were doing it, Diddy and Dixie told him what happened the day before with their four friends.

"... and that was it," Diddy said. "I don't understand what happened to them, we hadn't met them that way, they've never been like that. Although, well... they already apologized and we fixed it."

"So, that's what happened," Mr. Pinky said pensively. "Wow, how bad those kids behaved with you yesterday."

"What would you have done in that situation, Mr. Pinky?" Diddy asked. "How do you see it?"

"Hmm... the decision in the end is yours, guys," replied Mr. Pinky as he placed the cake mixture in the oven. "But if you ask me what I would do, well... the truth is that *I would reconsider* that friendship."

"What are you talking about?" Dixie asked, looking at him with some strangeness at his answer.

"Well, that," added the teacher. "Forcing you to do things you don't want to, making fun of you like that, meddling in your lives and making you look bad in public, are things that *friends shouldn't* do. Not to mention Miss Jenny: if she *intentionally* behaved like that towards Mr. Diddy, it's very likely that she'll do it again. And finally: look for a fight against you in front of everyone? That's clearly not a good attitude of friends. So... Mr. Diddy might be having some reason to doubt whether they would do it again. But as I told you, the matter is yours; if those children really apologized, good for them and for you... And yes, in case they treat you again like yesterday, it's better that you flee from there... because that's *not* being friends, really."

"Is that what you meant when you told us that those four seemed weird to you?" Dixie asked.

"Oh, no, I said that because I had seen some strange gestures in those children," Mr. Pinky replied with a little laugh. "But no, don't listen to me with that anymore... By the way, what are you doing with all those other ape children you met?"

Diddy and Dixie were silent for a moment; they remembered that they had something else to tell Mr. Pinky... and it was about the ship. But neither of them was sure if it was a good idea to tell him, since they feared that Mr. Pinky's impulsive character would come to light again.

"Uhh, mister... you see," Dixie stammered. "Do you promise us that you won't be angry if-"

Diddy opened his eyes to the fullest and gave Dixie a slight sneaky nudge so that she wouldn't say it.

"Huh? What happens now?" Mr. Pinky asked them, looking suspiciously.

"Uhh, nothing, Mr. Pinky," Diddy hurriedly replied. "What we do there is-"

"Diddy, he's going to find out anyway," Dixie interrupted quietly before speaking to the teacher. "Mr. Pinky, what happens is... Well... We are building a big ship."

"What?! A ship?" the teacher asked, looking at them more seriously. "And... how so?"

"It's that... our friends," Dixie stuttered before answering, "told us that they know a route where hurricanes don't pass and they can take us to DK Island... And that's why we're helping them too."

Mr. Pinky stared at them silently for a few seconds, and then gradually adopted a hard look, in fact, a stern look that Diddy and Dixie hadn't seen for a long time and only began to make them both nervous.

"Uhh, no, no, no, Mr. Pinky!" exclaimed Diddy, holding him by the arm as the teacher began to wrinkle his gaze more. "Calm down, please! We don't even know yet if that ship is really going to work... *Count to ten.*"

"Don't be angry, mister!" Dixie added, holding his other arm in the same way. "Breathe, please! You won't gain anything if you yell at us. Uhh, think of the fruitcake!"

Mr. Pinky exhaled hard and regained his posture. Diddy and Dixie were just begging that there wouldn't be another disagreement like the first day they arrived at that house.

"Oh, okay, okay," Mr. Pinky said, closing his eyes tightly and managing to stay calm. "And well... what exactly are you going to do with them?" he added, finishing holding back.

"A ship, mister," replied Diddy. "A huge and well-resistant one... Well, it's not *as huge* as they said, but it's big."

"Wait a minute, are you doing that with all *those kids*?" the teacher asked again, to which Diddy and Dixie nodded. Suddenly, the teacher gave them a look of weirdness. "Hey, it's not to get me into your business, but... I don't think they can make a ship of that magnitude; I mean... It's a *ship*, you would need to have a lot of knowledge and techniques about how to build one that really works."

"They can, our four friends know," Dixie reaffirmed. "They even made some plans, and in each step we make, they guide us. And they know a lot, even things that we didn't even know."

"Yeah, they always teach us new and strange terms about ships," Diddy added. "You should see it with your own eyes, mister. Even they say they have built boats before."

Mr. Pinky looked at them again strangely, as if they were just children playing at being explorers. Suddenly, he showed a slight smile, and seconds later, he began to laugh a little.

"Hey, I see that you and your friends have good imaginations to play," said the teacher, finishing laughing. "Just be careful not to have any accidents and-"

"It's not a lie, Mr. Pinky," Diddy replied before pausing. "Oh, well... yes, we're just really playing," he added with a forced smile as he sneakily winked at Dixie.

"Yeah, I should have known," Mr. Pinky said with a shrug. "Because at least *me*, I don't know any alternative route to DK Island, and besides, I don't think some kids could assemble a hurricane-proof ship."

Diddy and Dixie looked at each other and shrugged seeing that Mr. Pinky didn't believe them so much, so they thought it would be better not to continue the topic.

"By the way, mister, what were you going to say when you came to see us?" Dixie asked.

"Ah, yeah. This weekend I'll be absent during the day," replied the teacher. "I received a statement from the school where I'll teach next school cycle; I must go to introduce myself and organize some matters. It's going to be a long trip to another island, so I just wanted to tell you that that day you'll have to manage to get food or you can take whatever is here; this is your home."

"Okay, Mr. Pinky. Don't worry, we'll be able to do it," Diddy replied smiling, before being serious again. "Hey... but what about hurricanes?"

"No, that island is to the northeast; hurricanes don't pass there. And I'll return the same day, calm."

"Okay, mister," Dixie said. "So, we'll take care of it that day."

Chapter 47: Excluded

The next day was a new start of the week and, this time, Diddy and Dixie did meet again with their friends, since they had all reconciled, or at least hoped that this reconciliation had been sincere.

Diddy and Dixie got back to where the ship was under construction. They assumed that things would continue as normal in a social environment... *although it didn't seem to be so*. To begin with, they were received by the looks of weirdness and others of impact by the herd of kong children: some looked at them as if they were celebrities that everyone was talking about, and also some groups could be seen that, at first glance, were seen secretly gossiping about the two of them... and yes, all because of the scandal a couple of days ago. Diddy and Dixie were feeling somewhat uncomfortable because of all the indirect attention they were receiving. Both heard certain kong children murmuring and some could even be heard laughing quietly.

Then, they met Melvyn and greeted him. He returned the greeting as soon as he noticed them.

"Hi, Melvyn!" they both said, smiling at him.

"Hi, friends," Melvyn replied. "I thought you weren't coming."

"And why not?" Diddy said with a little laugh. "Where are the others?"

"They're over there assembling the sails of the ship," Melvyn said. Then, without saying more, he left... as if nothing.

Diddy and Dixie headed to where Melvyn had indicated. Their other friends were on the deck of the ship. This one already looked well advanced; there were still many pieces left, but at first glance, it was already taking ship shape, although as already mentioned... it wasn't as huge in the end as they had planned, but still, it looked spacious enough for a herd of kong children.

But there was something that seemed a bit strange to Diddy and Dixie: and that is that their four friends, in general, used to receive the four of them together as soon as the two of them arrived, but this time... it seemed to be *different*. Upon going up to the deck of the ship, they met Mandy and Ricky, who were placing the sails on the ship's masts.

"Hi, friends!" Diddy and Dixie said at the same time.

"Ah, hi, how are you?" Mandy replied, barely turning to look and greet them.

"How are you?" Ricky told them in a calm tone. "We were already waiting for you; we hadn't seen you."

"We just arrived," Diddy replied, watching the whole ship around. "What did you do yesterday?"

"We didn't make much progress, but we hope we do today," Ricky replied, keeping his eyes on what he was doing.

Diddy and Dixie continued to observe in detail how the ship was going. They were inspecting any corner at random to find out the latest news. But there was something that was catching their attention that day... although it was something rather neutral: and it's that Mandy and Ricky were

still working on their thing, which was obvious, but... it was in a way that began to give them the feeling that they had been greeted with a little indifference. Both didn't take it much of importance at first, so they spoke to them anyway.

"Hey, and how can we help you?" Dixie asked.

Ricky looked up at them a second time, and then stood pensively as he looked around, before looking at the sails they were assembling.

"Do you want to help us with these sails?" Ricky pointed to them. "We must also tie them to these meshes."

Diddy and Dixie joined the work with Ricky and Mandy; now they had to assemble the sails and place them on the masts, in addition to weaving some meshes that would later serve to fasten them to the edges of the ship. They both took care of one of the sails in particular... but then Mandy and Ricky had left them both alone to do that work; their two friends had gone to do something else and didn't even speak to them again.

Minutes after doing the above, Diddy and Dixie saw someone else from the quartet walking that was missing that day, of course it was Jenny, who was carrying some ropes for the sails. Then, she passed near Diddy and Dixie... although she barely wanted to look at them.

"Hi, Jenny!" Dixie said, greeting her along with Diddy.

"Hi," Jenny replied with a short and forced smile, and then went on as if nothing had happened.

Diddy and Dixie looked at each other in confusion and shrugged at her notorious indifferent gesture. They continued for another few minutes doing the work, until later, they were already finishing.

Then, a few of the other kong children in the herd came up and, just like when they arrived, looked with supreme curiosity at Diddy and Dixie, and later approached to talk to them.

"Hi!" said one of them, and then they both returned the greeting normally. "Hadn't you two broken up?"

"Uh, no, why?" Diddy replied, looking at them strangely.

"It's that we really thought Diddy had dated Jenny," they replied, laughing recklessly, which wasn't funny to Diddy and Dixie at all. "By the way, I'll tell you a secret... Yesterday, Jenny said she hates you two," one of them whispered.

"Oh, really?" Diddy exclaimed in a sarcastic tone.

The group of kong children went on with what they were doing before and continued to laugh, while Diddy and Dixie just looked at them in disgust for such a remark. Things weren't the same there anymore, apparently... Even the rest of the kong in the herd were starting to give Diddy and Dixie vibes of discomfort or indifference, and they didn't quite understand why.

The following days of the week continued in the same way... Yes, in the same way as the first day of that week. Diddy and Dixie no longer felt the same in that place as the previous week: starting with their four friends, they didn't receive them anymore as before, when the four together always

greeted them; now both just arrived and had to look for them to greet them rather... Not to mention, those greetings were as if they were just acquaintances. Likewise, there were no longer those long conversations, there were no more jokes while they worked, they no longer laughed much with them... They had become a bit distant, and it wasn't Diddy and Dixie who started having those attitudes, but the quartet themselves, especially Jenny; now she barely spoke to them about three or four times a day... although the reason was obvious. Still, Diddy and Dixie didn't quite understand why they acted like that; if it were for that scandal of that meeting, it was assumed that they all already had apologized for it, besides that it had been the four who started it, not the two of them. Sometimes, Diddy and Dixie even tried to make a joke to the four, but they no longer followed the flow and rather... they were treating them with indifference.

"No, no, no, it's on this side of the mast," Ricky said to a group of the other kongs as they were working.

On the deck of the ship were Diddy and Dixie's four friends along with a group of kong kids from the herd. They were making laborious adjustments to a mast, where the four gave instructions to the other children, and in turn helped them, since the work required strength. Diddy and Dixie were also in the same place, however... they were just in a corner apart, just watching the others work. Then, the two headed toward their friends to talk to them.

"Hey, can we help you with the masts?" Diddy asked the group along with Dixie.

"Uh, no, thank you," Melvyn replied, barely turning to look at them for a second and then continuing what he was doing. "We already have enough help."

"Oh, but we have done almost nothing," Dixie replied, her hands at her sides. "Isn't there anything else we can do?"

"Hey, but we're busy with this now," Ricky replied as he continued to work on the mast and barely looked at them both.

"What's wrong with you, by the way?" Dixie asked, looking at them seriously after a while. "Why have you been like this with us these days?"

"We just said we don't need you now, *that's all*," Mandy replied in an indifferent tone.

Diddy and Dixie were silent for a while at the way they were being treated, and only looked at them with some indignation.

"Oh, sorry if I didn't express myself well," Mandy said, giving herself a facepalm. "I meant that we'll tell you any task to do here later. Go rest for now."

"But it's what we've done most this week," replied Diddy. "Or are you upset with us?"

"What are you talking about?" Ricky said, looking at them strangely. "It's like the third time we've been told that; of course not."

As if they were just acquaintances, Diddy and Dixie were just being pushed aside among the entire herd. Their group of friends didn't even say anything to them again at that moment, and they just continued on with the work they were doing.

Diddy and Dixie felt somewhat left out by their four friends, they even saw how they gave more attention to the other kongs than to the two of them, that is... they knew they were their old friends, but until last week they all treated each other equally; now only the two of them felt that they were left over there, to the point where the four of them no longer put them to do so much work that would contribute to the construction of the ship. Diddy and Dixie at one point tried to talk about it with the four of them, but they four were only confused and denied that the situation had changed, although it was notorious that it had. And not to mention the rest of the herd of kong children there; rather they gave more attention to the two than the quartet... but it was just to ask them rather awkward questions about the scandal they had the previous weekend, so Diddy and Dixie preferred to stay away from them and not have to explain anything about the situation.

Chapter 48: Distant

The week was almost over, and the ship looked more advanced every day, therefore, it was a sign that Diddy and Dixie could soon be back on DK Island, although... they didn't feel that way; they weren't even excited as they should be. There was something that might not seem coherent to them: their four friends had told them both at first that the ship would be to take them back to DK Island as a gratitude, but with the distant attitudes they now had with the two, that didn't seem exciting, not to mention that they would go with another bunch of kong children with whom they no longer wanted to sympathize.

The group of Diddy and Dixie's friends was on the deck of the ship, guiding several of the kong children to adjust the sails and hold them. Then, Diddy and Dixie arrived on the scene, who had been doing nothing for quite some time, so they headed toward their friends.

"Hey, can we help you with the sails?" Diddy asked the four of them.

"Don't worry, they're already doing it," Mandy pointed up to where some of the kongs were standing on the masts adjusting the sails.

"Oh, we want to do something," Dixie insisted. "We've been doing nothing almost all day."

"But there's nothing you can do for now," Ricky replied with the same indifference, but then tried to apologize. "Oh, don't get it wrong, it's that there are already almost no things to do."

"Uhh... I got it!" Mandy added, being determined, while Diddy and Dixie were waiting for some meaningful tasks. "Why don't you clean up the debris in the cabins?"

"Isn't there... anything else to do?" Dixie asked, disappointed with the answer. "Is there nothing else to do about building this ship?"

"Yes, but don't worry, the other kids will," Ricky replied with a shrug before leaving.

The four of them continued to help the rest of the kongs, while Diddy and Dixie just watched and felt more and more that they were both left over in that place. Then, with no other alternative, they decided to do what they had been told.

"Well, which of the two do you choose?" Diddy asked Dixie, referring to the cabins all over the ship.

"If you want, I'll take charge of the one up here," Dixie replied. "You go to the bottom one, okay?"

Both, albeit reluctantly, headed to the different cabins on the ship. Dixie went to the one at deck level of the ship, where inside it, there was some debris and pieces that had been left, which she had to take out.

Meanwhile, Diddy walked down the internal stairs of the ship. He took charge of the cabin that was at the bottom of the ship, below deck. This was also full of leftover pieces, which he had to take out through the windows; it was a task that was very easy, so it became boring.

The place was large enough for everyone who would be the crew to enter, and Diddy just imagined what that trip would be like... even though he didn't have much excitement. It came to cross his mind that waiting for Mr. Pinky to take them to DK Island would be a better option, no matter if they would have to wait longer.

Diddy was finishing removing all the debris, when suddenly, he saw someone coming down the stairs. He began to tense up as he realized who it was: no one but Jenny... but this time, she just looked and greeted him from afar as if nothing, to which Diddy returned the gesture and was calm to remember that at least she hadn't spoken to them so much during that week. Jenny went on and started looking for something in the remaining rubble.

Those debris that Jenny was handling were the last ones Diddy needed to pick up, but even so, he had some distrust in being near her, so he only walked stealthily towards them. Diddy picked up some of the debris and got up toward the window. When suddenly, he felt that he was taken by the arm.

"Hey, wait a minute!" Jenny said, holding his arm. At that, Diddy was tense and tried to let go of her. "Oh, I'm not going to do anything to you, forget that," she added, rolling her eyes. "It's that I think that among those debris that you have there, there's a piece that we need right now."

Diddy looked at her suspiciously at first, but agreed to show them to her without saying anything. He placed the pieces on the floor, and then she came over to examine them. Diddy continued where he was, when suddenly... he noticed that Jenny was looking at him and began to smile at him a little, so he decided to sneak away.

"Hey, don't go, Diddy," Jenny said, taking him by the arm again. "Aren't you going to keep picking up debris?"

"No, no, no, I already was leaving," Diddy replied, letting go as he saw where the matter was going.

Diddy continued on his way, but suddenly, she grabbed his arm and pushed him against one of the walls.

"Hey!"

"I've got you, little monkey!" exclaimed Jenny with a little laugh.

Diddy immediately pushed her away and tried to flee. But instantly, Jenny cornered him again with force.

"Hey, let go of me!" Diddy exclaimed as he struggled to get out. "What's wrong with you now?!"

"Wait, wait, Diddy," Jenny said, speaking calmly and holding his arms, while looking at him smiling. "I just wanted to tell you-"

"No, no, no, Jenny!" interrupted Diddy again to struggle to push her away, but so did she. "Let go of me, please!"

"Hey, but just-"

"I don't want anything with you if that's what you think!"

Diddy was going to push her away, but Jenny held him tighter.

"Wait, Diddy!" she said, holding and smiling at him at the same time. "Don't you want to?"

"No! Why are you like this?!" Diddy interrupted her, pushing her away, before she held him tightly again.

"Because I love you, *Diddy*," she replied with a playful look, before getting closer. "So... wouldn't you want *us to give ourselves a chance*?"

"Hey, no, *wait a minute, Jenny!*" interrupted Diddy, gathering strength to let go and speak firmly to her. "I was already very clear with you, and you were supposed to have already apologized!"

"Oh, and what does that matter!" Jenny contradicted before holding him back down. "Come on, Diddy... give me a chance; Dixie won't find out," she added with a playful smile. "I would be better than her for you."

"Do you really not pity Dixie at least?" asked Diddy seriously.

"*Ugh, stop telling me that!*" Jenny replied, annoyed and cornered him harder. "Now... just *kiss me*."

Jenny forcibly approached to try to kiss him. But Diddy made a quick move and went under her arms to start running away. Instantly, Jenny also tried to go toward him. Diddy ran as far as he could towards the stairs and was about to go up.

"*DIX -*"

Diddy was on the third step, when suddenly, Jenny stepped on his tail and held him down. Diddy tried to get up, but instantly, Jenny cornered him against the steps.

"*Let me!*" Diddy exclaimed, trying to free himself.

"*Urgh, don't be a coward!*" Jenny exclaimed, trying to immobilize him. "Now you'll kiss me, monkey," she whispered as she approached him.

Jenny was going to try to kiss him again. When suddenly, Diddy pushed her away abruptly backwards, getting up.

"*Stop it, Jenny! I don't love you that way!*" Diddy shouted firmly.

Jenny grumbled furiously and gave Diddy a hard slap, before pushing him sharply against the stairs, causing him to fall again. Then, she lunged at him again.

"*JENNY!*" interrupted someone else who had arrived.

Suddenly, Dixie appeared coming down the stairs and immediately heading to the scene. Jenny changed her face instantly and showed herself not knowing what to do. Meanwhile, Diddy from the floor, rubbed his face because of the slap he received.

"What are you doing to Diddy?!" Dixie exclaimed, shocked to see the last thing Jenny did.

"Uhh... Hi, Dixie! I'm sorry!" Jenny said quickly, before pushing Diddy and then Dixie out of her way to go upstairs, but Dixie stopped her by pulling her arm.

"Wait a minute, Jenny!" exclaimed Dixie, holding her tightly by the shoulders and with a warning look. "Listen to me! I can tolerate you throwing all the flowers you want at Diddy, but never hurting him, much less hitting him!"

Jenny just gave Dixie a look of annoyance and pushed her too, to the point of making her fall down a couple of steps. Then, she went upstairs and left as fast as she could.

Dixie barely had time to get up and try to catch up with her, and just stared at her indignantly as she walked away; she had arrived just in time when she saw her last moves. She walked towards Diddy, who was standing up again and was still rubbing his face.

"Diddy... Are you okay?" Dixie asked worriedly.

"Jenny... is really... *crazy*," Diddy replied slowly and with some indignation.

Then, Dixie hugged him while she was still upset by what she had just witnessed. She looked up the stairs again where Jenny left and immediately remembered everything she had talked to her, how she treated her the best she could, and how she had promised them not to do something like that again, and now... it had been repeated. They both sat on the staircase, and Diddy told Dixie everything that had happened; she was now very disappointed with Jenny.

"... and then, she slapped me and pushed me against the stairs and that's where you came," Diddy finished telling her.

"I did see that. I thought I heard you call me and then I came to see what was going on... Ugh, Jenny really is crazy, that's already being insane!"

"I thought she wasn't going to be like that anymore, that is, yes at first, but since she didn't even talk to us so much anymore, I thought she had already given up. But no! She's insistent," Diddy complained. "It's as if she already does it on purpose."

"No, but this time she's already crossing the line," Dixie added earnestly. "She's crazy."

"Too much, she wasn't like that," Diddy replied with a shrug. "She has gone insane. Good thing you showed up, Dixie."

"Don't worry, you just stand by me if she sees us," Dixie replied earnestly. "I think we don't have to be near her anymore."

Minutes later, Diddy finished picking up the debris left, with Dixie's help as well. Then, they both went back up onto the deck. Almost everything was finished with respect to the sails and masts of the ship. Literally, everyone was doing something except for the two of them, they could even leave there and their four friends wouldn't even notice.

They both stayed close to the gunwale of the ship, just watching all the work. Between moments, one of their four friends passed near and greeted them, but then they continued along. When it came to Jenny, she only looked at them with apparent disgust, and at the same time, they both returned the same look, plus Diddy hugged Dixie and she also clung to him when they saw her. Dixie, for her part, was able to confirm that the apology she thought she received from Jenny had all been in vain and she didn't even bother to talk to her again.

A moment later, a group of the other kong children approached them. Diddy and Dixie looked at them strangely and, at the same time, begged that they not come to ask them reckless questions as they had done all week.

"Hey, do you want me to tell you a secret?" one of them said quietly to Diddy and Dixie. "The day you two didn't come, Ricky, Melvyn, Jenny and Mandy said that you two are ridiculous ones in love."

"Oh, please!" Diddy replied, annoyed, quietly too. "Could you stop telling us things like that?"

"No, no, no! Wait!" Dixie interposed firmly before asking those children. "How did they say?... What else have they said about us?"

"Hmm! You mean, *what haven't* they said about you two," another of the children replied in an ironic tone.

Diddy and Dixie were curious about that. At first, Diddy didn't like the comments that all those children were telling them during those days, but now it seems that he also wanted to know, since they were news that they hadn't known.

"You don't even know everything they said that day that you weren't here," continued another of the kong kids. "They said that you looked like a couple of dumbs in love and that hopefully one day you'll break up and stop being that ridiculous."

"Yeah, and that Dixie should stop being so dumb for believing that Diddy will always love her. Oh, yes, and also that Diddy is a 'cowardly butterfly' who only walks behind Dixie and everything is with Dixie and his world is only Dixie and he doesn't know another no Dixie girl."

"And they said that a couple of weeks ago, Diddy had given Dixie a gift, but everything went wrong... You don't know how they laughed when they told us that."

Diddy and Dixie were shocked for a few seconds. They didn't want to believe them much, since maybe they didn't know if such comments were fake and suddenly those children made them up because of the scandal they had had the week before.

"Are you saying all that seriously?" asked Dixie, crossing her arms. "But... they said all that only the day we didn't come, right?"

"Well, actually... yesterday they also said some things like that, but less than that day," the kids replied as if they were not sure about answering them. Well, that was all we had to tell you. Don't tell them what we told you, by the way," they whispered at the end.

The kong children left, while Diddy and Dixie had been left with certain doubts... But at the same time, they thought they wouldn't be so wrong; with the attitude of indifference that their four friends had had with them in those days, maybe... could be true what they had just been told.

Within dark, Diddy and Dixie were home again, having returned a little earlier than normal. Among some novelties, Mr. Pinky had already left in the morning to the other island where he had said he

would go; he had gone to do some paperwork at the school where he would give classes the next school cycle, which was not so far to start.

Both little kongs were sitting on the last terrace of the house; they needed a moment to think things through with respect to... their four friends.

"I don't think it's true," Diddy said, trying to reason. "That is, about the day we didn't go I could believe that they have spoken like that about us, but... about yesterday?"

"You know, Diddy... I suppose you were a little right," Dixie added with a low look. "I think we forgive them too easily; I mean, friends forgive each other and everything, but... those attitudes they have had with us give me a lot to think about."

"I know... And these days they have ignored us most of the time we have been there. And if it were true that they made fun of the failed gift I made for you, so... were they already like that with us before?"

"But I still don't understand why they behave like that; we never did anything wrong to them. In addition, last week's scandal was started by them, first because of a few simple games and then because of Jenny."

"Or maybe it's because of her that they want to see us bad. And not to mention Jenny today; she behaved worse than ever with me."

"Ugh, and about Jenny is another case, too," Dixie said rather disappointed. "I see that her apology wasn't serious... I tried to understand her, I didn't even turn against her, I talked to her and treated her well, and the last thing I wanted was for us to stop being friends, but... I see she doesn't care at all."

"Yeah, I noticed, Dixie... and she doesn't really care; at that moment she told me in a blatant way," Diddy replied with pity and placing a hand on her shoulder. "But at least you did the best you could with her. In fact, with the four of us we tried to do the right thing, but it doesn't seem that they have really apologized... I no longer know if we can call that 'friends' as Mr. Pinky had told us."

"If so... we could get away from them, but what would we do with the ship?" Dixie questioned. "I mean, they're making it for us supposedly."

"That's what I'm thinking too, but I don't want to have done all that work in vain either. Anyway... when we get to DK Island, we won't see them anymore."

"Well, I hope so, because I really don't want to see them," Dixie said earnestly before entering a moment of silence. "By the way, what time is it? Shouldn't Master Pinky have called us?"

"That's right. I haven't heard him," Diddy replied in confusion. "Let's see if he's there."

Diddy and Dixie got up, and then went down to Mr. Pinky's house, as they hadn't seen a trace of him since they returned. But looking through the windows, it was all dark and there was no sign that he was inside.

"How strange," Diddy said, looking out the window. "Now that I remember, he had said he would come back after noon, and it's practically night."

"Maybe he'll take even longer at the school where he went... But it's strange; he never takes so long."

"Or could it be that... something happened to him?" Diddy asked worriedly.

"I don't think so, he went to another island, but the hurricane doesn't go that way," Dixie replied before thinking of a known place. "Why don't we go to the shelter to see if he's not there? He sometimes passes by."

Diddy and Dixie immediately headed to the animal shelter; Mr. Pinky also used to frequent that place to greet his friends there.

Upon entering the shelter, there were the known animals present in that place. Those who had been from the circus were already seen with a much-improved countenance and with their wounds already almost healing, something that pleased Diddy and Dixie and made them smile...

Although this time, and not only those from the circus, they were all seen with a few expressions of concern, in fact, there were some groups of animals crowded and talking as if something had happened recently, which activated curiosity in Diddy and Dixie.

"Hey, little monkeys!" an elephant greeted them along with some of the circuses, and they both returned the greeting. "How long without seeing you, what brings you around here? How have you been?"

"We're fine as far as can be said," Dixie replied, smiling, before being serious. "Well, although we did come for something."

"We wanted to ask you if Mr. Pinky hasn't been here," Diddy added.

"Mr. Pinky? Well, no, we haven't seen it," the animals replied, looking confused. When suddenly, they began to be shocked. "Don't tell me! He also disappeared?!"

"What?" Dixie exclaimed with a look of surprise. "No, that is... he left this morning, he should have returned at noon but he hasn't arrived, and we thought he was around here. But we wouldn't say he 'disappeared' yet."

"By the way, is there anything happening?" asked Diddy as he noticed the tense atmosphere of the place. "And what do you mean about *also*?"

"Oh, you don't even know the last news," the animals said, looking too worried. "For a couple of days about ten apes have been coming here to ask about their children or their siblings. They say they have been missing for more than a month, or even two months!"

"What are you saying?" Diddy exclaimed, in surprise along with Dixie.

"But on this same island?" Dixie asked, looking at them strangely.

"Yes, they say they went out to play, and one day they didn't come back," replied one of the animals. "And that they knew nothing more about them."

"And what were those missing apes like?" Dixie asked.

"Everyone said they were similar like the two of you," the animals commented. "By the way, haven't you met more friends who are like you and who are lost?"

"Well... we've met a few more," Diddy replied with some confusion. "But none have said they're lost or anything. In fact, they're all old friends of our friends who we introduced here a couple of weeks ago."

"Or could it be that... Mr. Pinky has a hand in this?" the animals wondered, beginning to be alarmed.

"Hey, I don't think so," Dixie replied earnestly. "He's no thief. In addition, this morning he went to a school on another island where he'll teach."

"Oh... So, he's not to be responsible for this," the animals said. "But no, little monkeys, we haven't seen Mr. Pinky. Oh, and another thing, please be careful, we wouldn't want you to disappear like that too."

Diddy and Dixie looked at each other with quite confusion from what they had just heard from the animals. Although anyway, they didn't want to think about bad situations while they had doubts about the whereabouts of Mr. Pinky.

Both thanked the animals for responding to them and said goodbye. Then, they returned home to see if Mr. Pinky was back.

When they arrived, they looked out of the teacher's window again, but... everything was still dark and the door was still secured; in short, there was no trace of him... That was getting too strange.

"This is very weird," Diddy said after looking out the window. "It's already night and Mr. Pinky hasn't arrived."

"Maybe he's traveling toward here," Dixie added. "What if he arrives in the early morning?"

"We'll have to wait," Diddy added, starting to look more worried. "Geez, what may have happened?"

"Or maybe he had some difficulty," Dixie said in the same way.

Then, both returned to their room, but not before picking a few fruits to be able to have dinner, as Mr. Pinky had indicated... who for some reason, still didn't give signs when for several hours he should have already done so. However, both wanted to think that he had only had a few inconveniences that had caused him to delay.

Chapter 49: Wrench

The next day had arrived, so Diddy and Dixie were getting ready. To tell the truth, they were not so in the mood to go and continue working on that ship, and they had even considered not going. But anyway, they decided to continue.

They assumed that Mr. Pinky would have already arrived during the early morning. They went back up to his house, took a look out the window, but to their surprise... there was no sign of him being there, and the door was still secured. All their things in the house could be seen intact, just as they had seen them the night before.

"Hasn't he arrived?" Dixie said worriedly.

"Apparently not," Diddy replied in the same tone. "Could it be that he has been kidnapped?... Or did the hurricane pass through the way he traveled?"

"I hope not, or maybe he had to stay there longer," Dixie said, trying to stay calm. "Although he didn't tell us anything."

Both were already worrying enough, since Mr. Pinky had never left like this, but they still wanted to think that he would return and had only had a mishap in the place he went, so it would take a little longer.

Diddy and Dixie left the house, still hoping that they would find Mr. Pinky when they returned. They were both very hungry, so they went looking for some bananas among the trees. They had some time that they could not get food autonomously.

Then, they made their way, albeit reluctantly, to the site where they were building the ship. After all, they couldn't waste all the work they had done, despite things weren't going so well with their four friends. Besides, they had promised to help them return to DK Island, something they had both wanted so much since they were in the circus.

They arrived at the construction site and were met by Ricky and Melvyn, who greeted them with apparent normalcy this time.

"Hey, how are you, friends?!" Ricky greeted them, smiling at them... In fact, he did it as he used to before. Diddy and Dixie greeted them as well. "You know what? We're going to finish our ship soon!"

"Yeah, it only needs a few small pieces, some adjustments and that's all!" Melvyn added, looking excited.

"Really?" Diddy replied with a forced smile. "That's nice."

"That's right," Ricky added, maintaining excitement. "And that means you'll soon be back on your island!"

"And we'll take you home first on our journey," Melvyn said cheerfully. "This trip is especially for *our best friends we've ever had*," he added, giving Diddy and Dixie a few little nudges of excitement.

Both smiled at the gesture, although deep down they didn't feel as excited as they did... And they weren't too happy with the "best friends they've ever had" label either.

"What are you waiting for? Let's finish the ship," Ricky said, inviting them.

"Hey... but this time we'll do something, right?" Diddy asked them with folded arms.

"Well, yes, why not?" Ricky replied, looking at them strangely before catching what they said. "Oh, hey, we haven't been excluding you, why do you keep hinting at that?"

"Yeah, where do you get those things?" Melvyn added in the same way. "We're your friends, how could we ignore you?"

"Well... I don't know if you've noticed," Dixie replied with a shrug, "but you've been very weird with us this week."

"What are you talking about?" Ricky said with a look of weirdness. "We're not weird with you; we've been building the boat as usual."

"Anyway, let's continue," Melvyn added, taking them by the arms. "Let's see the ship."

Ricky and Melvyn invited Diddy and Dixie to continue. Apparently, this time they were being treated normally as before; they didn't seem to be upset with both of them and, apparently, the indifference they had had with the two of them that week had disappeared as if nothing had happened. Now Diddy and Dixie were confused.

The group got up to the deck, where most of the ship was almost finished.

"By the way, I wanted to ask you something," Diddy said, hoping to find an answer to something that had been troubling them both for the past few hours. "Haven't you seen Mr. Pinky by any chance?"

"No, why?" Ricky and Melvyn replied, looking confused.

"He has left since yesterday morning to a school on another island and has not returned."

"Well, not really," Melvyn replied, still confused. "In fact, the last time we saw him was on the day of Dixie's gift. Has he got lost?"

"That's what we don't know," Dixie replied. "He doesn't use to leave like that. He had told us that he would return yesterday at noon, but he has given no signal."

Ricky and Melvyn didn't give them any expected positive response either. That was already worrying Diddy and Dixie more, since nowhere did they receive news about Mr. Pinky and didn't want to think the worst.

The small group began to resume work, and this time Diddy and Dixie were able to collaborate, since Ricky and Melvyn were including them again in the tasks.

"Hey, what about the girls?" Dixie asked them later, as she hadn't seen them.

"They're not here and I don't think they'll come back until the evening," Melvyn replied as they continued to work. "In fact, you don't even know what happened to Mandy this morning."

"She's with allergies," Ricky added. "Recently, we went to get food near a lake. She climbed some palm trees to reach some coconuts, but fell into the water. And you know... a bunch of red spots appeared on her skin. So, she went to the medicine ape, and Jenny went to accompany her. And those treatments are so long-lasting."

"Wow, it must have been terrible for her," Dixie replied with pity. "Poor Mandy."

"Yeah, those kinds of situations have happened to us frequently," Melvyn said. "I once fell off one of our boats while we were sailing and spent a lot of time in the water... You can already imagine how my skin got."

They all continued to work on construction. For some reason, Ricky and Melvyn interacted that day with Diddy and Dixie as if nothing had happened; apparently, they had returned to being good with them: again, they talked frequently, they joked and talked again as before and, in the same way, they already included them in tasks that they had to contribute to the construction of the ship. Diddy and Dixie thought that maybe they just needed time to get things back to normal. They remained in a quiet rhythm all afternoon while continuing the work, in fact, they felt that that day there was a tranquility as before... and it's that to tell the truth, and although they didn't want to admit it, Diddy was calm on the one hand because Jenny wasn't present, and likewise Dixie; finally, felt that she had nothing to worry about.

Night was almost coming and, of course, the ship was almost finished with the naked eye; it had been a productive day. Diddy and Dixie were with Ricky and Melvyn on the deck of the ship making adjustments to the helm.

"When would we start the trip?" Dixie asked them as she held the helm.

"When we finish everything; there is very little left," replied Ricky. "Maybe today or tomorrow will be the last day and we already have our ship ready."

"This doesn't fit!" Melvyn complained as he tried hard to adjust a screw with a wrench. "I can't anymore..." he added, looking exhausted.

"Wait a minute, this is not the right wrench," Ricky said, taking the wrench Melvyn used. "The wrench we need here is bigger."

"Well, that's the only one I've seen today," Melvyn replied with a shrug.

"Ah, yes, I think I remember I left it there," Ricky said, pointing to a path through the trees. "Hey, Diddy, could you go get it please? It's the other wrench we use, the one that is bigger."

"Are you sure you left it there?" Diddy asked.

"Yes, while we were adjusting some masts, I dropped it there," Ricky replied, giving himself a facepalm and with small laughter. "Go, it's not that far; just search in that area. Meanwhile, here we'll continue adjusting the other screws."

Diddy shrugged and got off the ship to go in search of that wrench. He walked through a place among the trees, and began to search in the area.

Meanwhile, Dixie along with Ricky and Melvyn continued with what they were doing. The helm still had adjustments that needed to be made, so they worked on that. When suddenly, someone

called them by surprise.

"Hi!" that known voice suddenly exclaimed. "I've arrived, how did everything go today?"

"Ah, Mandy!" Ricky replied, seeing the kong girl again. "Did you come back recently?"

"No, we've been here for a few minutes," she replied. "I was helping another group of kids with a piece."

"Did your allergies heal well?" Melvyn asked.

"I feel the best now," Mandy replied, smiling. "Geez, it was horrible the itch I had from falling into that lake... Oh, hi, Dixie! How are you?" she greeted her when she noticed her.

"Hi, Mandy," Dixie replied in kind. "I hadn't seen you today, do you feel better?"

"Yes, of course. They may have already told you what happened to me," Mandy said with a few small laughs. "Anyway, what are you doing right now?"

"We were adjusting this helm," Ricky replied. "Hey, what about Jenny?"

"Oh, she's here too," Mandy said in a pensive manner... though she seemed to be looking sideways at Dixie. "She was also helping that group of kids; in a while she may finish. In fact, I was already going to return to that group. See you!"

Mandy then left and stepped off the ship, while Ricky and Melvyn continued with Dixie adjusting the helm they were working on. Everything seemed to have gone well that day in the construction of that ship.

"Diddy isn't taking long, by the way?" Melvyn said after a while.

"Hey, it's true, why don't we go help him look for the wrench too?" Ricky added, getting up. "Come if you want too, Dixie."

On the other hand, Diddy was still looking for the wrench, and had been looking for it for several minutes, but there seemed to be no trace of it. To make matters worse, the area wasn't so bright, that stones and leaves on the ground could hardly be seen. He rummaged through the bushes and stones, but found nothing. He was thinking of going back and asking for help searching.

Suddenly, Diddy heard some light noises around him. He looked everywhere but there was nothing, so he continued with the search. Seconds later, he heard another noise as if an object had fallen on the ground. He turned to look and, to his surprise, it was a wrench, which was on the edge of a tree. It was a bit strange, but he still went to take it and finally it was the one he was looking for.

Diddy was going to return with the wrench to the others, when suddenly, he received a small blow to the head that made him hurt a little. He was going to turn to see what had been, when from one moment to another, someone took him forcibly by the shoulders and turned him towards the tree, making him fall towards it and hold on... Instantly, he also felt that *someone* started kissing him on the lips... It was *Jenny*.

"*B-but what?!*" Diddy exclaimed in alarm before pulling away and releasing her immediately.

"DIDDY?!" at the same time, another voice exclaimed that Diddy *would not* have wanted to hear at the time.

Diddy looked to the side, and to make matters worse, there was Dixie staring at him with an expression of full shock, and next her were Ricky and Melvyn in the same way. Diddy froze without understanding what had happened, since he didn't even know where Jenny had come from.

"B-but how-?!" Diddy stuttered.

"What? You said let's kiss, didn't you, Diddy?" Jenny interrupted with a playful smile.

"*What?! No, no, no!*" Diddy exclaimed, coming to his senses. "*I don't understand what happen-*"

"But what have you done, Diddy?!" Melvyn exclaimed, all shocked along with Ricky.

Ricky and Melvyn made sounds of astonishment and began to ask him with extreme curiosity what they had seen, while Dixie was only all paralyzed; she had arrived just as she saw something she would never have wanted to see. Before her impulses consumed her, she made a gesture of indignation and rushed out of the scene.

"*No, no, no, Dixie!*" exclaimed Diddy trying to reach her, but she was going further, and besides they stopped him. "*Wait!*"

"*Diddy! Jenny!*" interrupted Ricky interposing in his way along with Melvyn.

"Didn't you say it had nothing to do with Diddy, Jenny?!" Melvyn added in the same way.

"Well... *it really has*," Jenny replied, looking sideways at Diddy.

"*Hey, NO! What's wrong with you, Jenny?! What did you do?!*" contradicted Diddy in anger. "*You really don't understand anything?!*"

"Oh, I'm sorry!" Jenny replied with a malicious, sarcastic smile, which made Diddy angrier.

"What happened here?!" exclaimed an additional voice.

Suddenly, and similar to the last time, the other kong children began to join the scene until a crowd formed again, at the same time that they began to murmur and some approached Diddy to ask if such rumors were true. Diddy was about to collapse; again, he had been involved in an uproar and for the same reason... although this time was worse.

Diddy, on the verge of losing control, just wanted to get out of there too. He pushed away all who stood in his way, and then ran as far as he could from there; he didn't have enough patience to endure such a scandal again at that time.

Diddy sped through the trees, and stopped when he was sure no one could see him. He tried to calm down a little and be able to process everything, because he didn't imagine that something like that could happen to him that day, he didn't even know how Jenny could surprise him like that; he was all convinced that she wasn't even present in that place. He already said that it was very strange to have had a quiet day. Now Diddy only felt too much discomfort and indignation at what had just happened to him.

Minutes later, he decided to head to the house, as he assumed Dixie had gone there. He didn't want to imagine what face she would make, and just wanted to think that at least she was okay. Diddy was on his way to the house, when suddenly, among all the trees, he saw a known silhouette... which was from Dixie.

Dixie was standing next to some bushes. She had an expression of having been left with a blank mind; she didn't know if what she had seen recently was real or if she was just dreaming because of her insecurities Jenny caused her about Diddy. Anyway, that image of Diddy with Jenny was repeated a thousand times in her head, and it was repeated... tormenting her thoughts.

Diddy arrived where Dixie was. He didn't know how she would react if he spoke to her, as it was clear that she wasn't happy at all and, to his bad luck, the way she had seen him with Jenny was obvious enough that she could think badly this time. Still, Diddy wanted to feel sure talking to her, since he wasn't really to blame for anything.

"Dixie..." Diddy said, approaching her with a little trepidation, though Dixie didn't want to turn around at first. "I swear what you just saw wasn't what sure you're thinking!"

"What did I just see?" said Dixie about to burst, before turning to Diddy. "What... was what you did, *Diddy Kong*?!"

"I didn't do anything! I swear I didn't!" Diddy replied, raising his voice as well. "I didn't even know Jenny was there, she's not supposed to be--"

"But you did it anyway; I saw it clearly!" interrupted Dixie angrily. "Why, Diddy?! I thought you never--"

"*No!* I didn't do anything, it was Jenny, you know how she is!" Diddy interrupted, holding her shoulders. "Let me explain, please!"

"But now I just saw it with my own eye -"

"That I can explain it to you!... Please, listen to me."

Dixie was on the verge of collapse, but Diddy looked at her firmly so that she could calm down and listen to him. Dixie heaved a loud sigh, trying not to lose control and let him give his explanation, even if she had seen clearly as if *he* had given a chance to Jenny.

"See, Dixie, I just went to get that wrench, nothing else," Diddy said quickly. "And then that wrench appeared and I went to pick it up, and before I came back Jenny appeared, she took me by the shoulders, made me fall towards the tree and then kissed me! But I neither knew she would appear, nor had I seen her!"

"And how do you explain that you were holding her in front of you?" Dixie asked him extremely seriously.

"Well, she made me fall to the front, and instinctively I had to hold on to something; I didn't even realize it was her!"

Dixie was silent for a moment, trying to process the explanation. She had trusted Diddy all along and even defended him from Jenny; he had quite gained her trust in the midst of all her insecurity for her... But now she didn't quite know what to think about what she had just witnessed.

"You're lying, right?" Dixie said before turning and leaving.

"No, Dixie!" Diddy exclaimed, reaching for her and taking her arm. "I'm telling you everything seriously!"

"But I did see it all with my *own eyes*!" replied Dixie.

"If you had really seen it *all*, you would believe me," Diddy countered.

That answer only made Dixie angrier, as she just pulled her arm away from Diddy and continued walking.

"Dixie, please!" Diddy exclaimed, following her, but she just kept walking with a few long and very reluctant steps. "Oh, come on, Dixie... you know I don't love Jenny! She didn't even kiss me well; I pushed her away... Please, believe me... I didn't even notice Jenny; I thought she was with Mandy as we had been told... I just went for that wrench... And you know what Jenny is like... You really don't believe me, Dixie?"

"*Ugh, don't follow me now, please!*" Dixie interrupted, raising her voice, before making a gesture of regret for having shouted. "Uh... I-I just need to think about it, Diddy, please... I'm sorry. I'll go to the house," she added more calmly, before leaving completely.

Diddy just stared at her as she walked away and headed to the house. He felt so bad; his girlfriend had been angry about something he never intended to do; it had happened, but he hadn't noticed at the time.

At Dixie's request, he decided not to follow her and instead went for a walk in the area. But later, he also felt a great impulse to want to return to the site of the ship, because he was curious to know what could be happening there after the event. Maybe the scandal would still live on or maybe it was all over, so Diddy immediately headed to the place.

Diddy arrived again at the site where they were building the ship, but this time he didn't join the others, rather he just stayed hidden among the trees and bushes, trying not to make so much noise and keeping a low profile. To Diddy's surprise, the quartet was reunited with the other kong children; they seemed to be telling them something, while laughing out loud.

Diddy went to the bushes closest to them so he could hear them... He felt that something wasn't right with them. And then, he stopped to listen to what they were saying.

"Did they believe that about my allergies?!" Mandy said as she laughed loudly.

"Yes, everything went on the way we wanted; they thought Jenny and Mandy weren't here," Ricky added with a sly smile. "You would all have seen those two's faces when it happened. And we arrived *just in time* for Dixie to see!"

"That monkey just pretended, but he let himself be kissed anyways," Jenny added in a mocking tone. "And then his foolish girlfriend ran out. She must be crying now, *poor*."

"The trick with the 'lost' wrench worked!" Melvyn said excitedly before laughing. "Poor dumb monkey who really believed it and went looking for it."

"But they'll break up with all this no matter what," Mandy concluded, smiling maliciously.

"I hope so! Pair of *ridiculous monkeys*," Ricky said mockingly. "Hey! But you know, don't say any of this to them," he added, speaking to the other kong children. Then, everyone continued to laugh mockingly.

Diddy was completely shocked... and very indignant too. He had just heard with his own ears as his *supposed* four friends trampled on him and Dixie, as well as discovering that the whole event had been *planned* by them. In a nutshell... they themselves had intentions to separate him and Dixie, and had manipulated them to make it happen.

Diddy was slowly feeling strong urges to get out and confront the four of them, but he couldn't; he was also fed up with so much drama, that he just wanted to go to the house and, of course, fix things with Dixie in the first place. He wanted her to be there too, listening to the four of them at that moment so that she would know the truth and believe him. Without doing anything else, Diddy turned around and decided to return to the house, at the same time that he was grumbling along the way with all the anger and indignation he felt at that moment.

Dixie was sitting on the floor of the room; she was very overwhelmed by what had happened. First of all, she was all disappointed in Jenny, because the week before, after the first scandal, she had apologized and Dixie had treated her as best she could, had tried to understand her, to explain how she felt and, moreover, never wanted to be on bad terms with her for Diddy... But apparently, Jenny didn't care at all; she didn't care how Dixie would feel or the fact that she was her friend, and she didn't care to do anything to get close to Diddy. And, to make matters worse, she had recently just seen how she had managed to get close and kiss him. And, even though Diddy clarified how it happened, Dixie didn't know whether to believe it or not. Diddy had shown her that she could trust him and was not afraid to tell her anything that wasn't right, she had even seen what Jenny was like with Diddy, but still... Dixie seemed to find no comfort at the time, not after what she had seen *live* with her own eyes.

Minutes later, someone knocked on the door, and Dixie got up to open it. It was Diddy, who also brought a few bananas. He smiled at her with some insecurity and shyness, while she kept her expression serious, which only made Diddy change his face and be sad for her.

Diddy walked into the room, and Dixie just went to sit in her hammock, turning her back to him. There was a silence for several seconds, and Dixie didn't even look at Diddy; she couldn't do it.

"I brought some bananas for dinner, do you want it?" said Diddy, handing her a few, with some insecurity. She barely took them without turning over.

"Thank you," Dixie replied, still not looking at him and keeping her seriousness.

"Uhh, and Mr. Pinky still doesn't show up too," Diddy added.

"I already did notice."

Diddy wanted to talk to Dixie and keep asking her to believe him, but he didn't feel so confident about it because of the attitude she was having. But he knew he would have to talk to her anyway if he wanted to really fix things with her.

"Hey, Dix... can we talk?" asked Diddy, still not getting an answer from her. "Don't look at me if you want. But I just found out something... When you left, I went back there for a while to see what everyone would be doing and... I heard those four of them telling others that *what* happened recently was all *planned by them*."

"What...?" Dixie said at last, turning to Diddy and looking at him strangely.

"Yeah, everything was planned! Mandy's allergies were a lie; she and Jenny were there the whole time. The wrench matter was also a lie; they had purposely left it hidden so that I would go find it and Jenny would take advantage of me. And besides, Ricky and Melvyn then told you to go and get me, right? Because they also mentioned that they arrived *just in time* for *you* to see everything."

Dixie was pensive for a moment after that explanation; she still tried to believe Diddy as he told her more and more details.

"Are you really telling me, Diddy?" Dixie asked, looking confused.

"Yes! And they also spoke ill of us, I heard them!" Diddy added, speaking quickly and indignantly. "They called us 'pair of ridiculous monkeys', each one spoke in a derogatory way about us, said that hopefully we'll break up after what happened, and in the end, they told the rest not to tell us anything about what they were talking about. You should have seen that too!"

Dixie was more confused. Diddy hoped that with that she would believe him better, but instead, he received no positive response from her, so she turned again.

"Oh, don't you really believe me, Dixie?" asked Diddy with a plea. "Please, Dix-"

"I don't know, Diddy!" exclaimed Dixie, turning all over and raising her voice a little, but then restrained herself and spoke to him normally. "Ugh... See, actually *I* do believe everything you tell me, it's just that... I can't get that image out of my head recently about *Jenny* with you... That's all."

Diddy was silent for a while. He knew that Dixie had been affected by what happened and that made it difficult for her to understand the situation. Suddenly, Dixie began to have some tears in her eyes, but she was trying to contain herself.

"Oh, I think I understand..." Diddy said with some insecurity. "You are... jealous, right?"

"Well, yes..." Dixie replied truthfully, though with some embarrassment. Then, she wiped a few tears before emitting a small sob. "Sorry, Diddy, sorry... And I don't want to keep pretending I don't care anymore and I don't mind that about her."

"Hey, don't apologize for that, Dix-"

"Diddy..." she interrupted, wiping her eyes, "and we'd better not talk now; I'm sure I'll come out yelling at you and I don't like to argue with you like that... Wait until it passes and we'll talk about it tomorrow... I don't feel good now."

"Oh... I understand, Dixie," Diddy replied quietly.

Diddy felt bad about how Dixie said she felt; he never wanted to make her feel that way, much less for something that he wasn't to blame. He wanted to talk to her and fix things, but he didn't want to

pressure her either, so he decided not to pursue the topic for the time being. Instead, he just wanted to try to make her feel better.

"Do you want me to... give you a hug?" Diddy asked her with some hesitation in having asked.

Dixie, as she finished wiping a few tears, looked up at him and then lowered it again, before nodding her head a little, to which Diddy went to sit next to her and proceeded to hug her for a while.

Although Dixie was somewhat upset about what happened and didn't reciprocate the hug this time, she stayed with her head resting on Diddy's shoulder. Later, Diddy separated from her and stared at her for a few seconds.

"I'm sorry, Diddy," Dixie said, sadly, before hugging him this time. "And sorry for yelling at you... and not believing you."

"No, no, don't worry," he replied as he held her. "And that's okay, we can talk tomorrow if that makes you feel better."

Dixie continued with her gaze lowered, and later nodded. Then, Diddy retreated to head towards his hammock.

After settling in, Diddy began to eat the bananas he had brought, at the same time that Dixie did the same, although with a noticeably low mood.

Later, they were already prepared for sleep. And Mr. Pinky? He still didn't appear, which also worried both, since that day had been the second in a row that they hadn't seen him.

Chapter 50: Vengeful Challenge

The next day, in the morning, Diddy went out to pick more bananas, but not before looking out the window of Mr. Pinky again and then realizing that he still didn't appear... That was getting more worrisome.

On the other hand, Dixie also went out for some bananas, and then returned to the house to eat. Diddy was also accompanying her between times, although they spoke almost nothing. Then, they returned to the house and ate the bananas.

Later, it was time to leave and go to continue with the ship, although to tell the truth, neither of them had the intention of going at all, with much more reason for what happened the day before. Even so, they would have to go, since that day they were going to plan how and when they would undertake the long-awaited trip... although the two of them didn't even expect it anymore.

"We have to leave now," Diddy said to Dixie. "Do you want to go?"

"I won't go today," Dixie replied earnestly, sitting in her hammock. "If you want, just you."

"Are you sure? Today they'll tell us when we are leaving and those details."

"Yes, I don't want to go," Dixie said, turning around. "I don't want to see any of them."

"Okay. So... I'll come back later," Diddy replied before heading to the door, but then stopped to speak to Dixie one more time. "Uhh... You still... don't want to talk?"

"No," Dixie replied with a lowered look. "I still don't feel well to talk, Diddy."

Diddy knew that Dixie was still not feeling quite right, so he decided not to bother her for the time being. Still, he wished they could fix things with her as soon as possible; he didn't want to be on bad terms for something he wasn't to blame.

Then, Diddy got out of the house and began to head back to the site of the ship, although he was quite upset when he remembered what happened the day before.

"Hey! Little monkey!" said someone behind Diddy.

Diddy, being a couple of meters from the house, turned to look and found a tall and thin ape wearing short clothes and a cap, and also carrying a purse.

"How are you? I'm a mail courier," said the ape, showing him a red plaque with gold letters. "This is Mr. Pinky Kong's house?"

"Uh, yes... why?" Diddy replied with some strangeness.

"He sent this letter to his two students: Diddy Kong and Dixie Kong," he replied, pulling out an envelope and handing it to Diddy. "You must be Diddy Kong, right?"

"Yes, it's me. Thank you," Diddy replied, taking the envelope. Suddenly... a little air of hope returned. "Wait a minute. So, you know where Mr. Pinky is?!"

"Oh, yes, he told you he went to a meeting at a school, right? He sent me to tell you that he'll still stay a few days there and not to worry about him... Well, that's all. Goodbye, monkey."

The courier ape said goodbye and left. Diddy felt a little relief instantly after receiving news from Mr. Pinky.

"Okay, thank you!" Diddy replied before leaving as well.

Diddy continued on his way and, in the meantime, opened the envelope containing the letter sent by Mr. Pinky. He read it on the way and, indeed, it was the teacher's handwriting. It read:

"Greetings, Mr. Diddy and Miss Dixie:

I hope you 're well. I'm writing to inform you that I had some problems to solve, so I'll still be here until next week, so you'll have to get food yourselves, I know you can. Don't worry about me, I'm fine and everything is fine around here. And don't worry, there are no hurricanes in this area, and I'll arrive in time to take you back to DK Island as soon as everything passes. Behave well and take care of yourselves, kids.

Pinky Kong"

The letter ended with the signature of the teacher, besides the date of the previous day, the address of his house and the name of the island where he had gone. Finally, it had a stamp that said "Hurricane Island Post Office", and came in conjunction with a large-scale map indicating that island.

Diddy got a wide smile and took small leaps of excitement after reading it; at least he already knew that Mr. Pinky was fine and, just as they wanted to think about it, he had just had to stay away longer. Then, he continued walking until he reached the site where the ship was almost finished.

Meanwhile, Dixie had stayed at home. She decided to spend some time on the last terrace to think for a moment. She was in doubt about whether to believe Diddy and how things happened.

Dixie wanted to be calm and not be filled with insecurities or negative thoughts about Diddy. She wanted to trust him, she wanted to believe his version of the event, but at the same time... she didn't want to be wrong either, as she had seen him with Jenny with her own eyes as if he was kissing her this time. Even though she didn't want to go that day where the others would continue with the ship, she was gaining a huge urge to want to go, rather to go and see what would happen to Diddy. But at the same time, she didn't want to... She was afraid of encountering something that would only hurt her more... *Or maybe, if it was a good idea to go*, she thought.

Diddy arrived at the construction site again. There were all the kongs along with their four... friends? Although to tell the truth, Diddy wasn't at all happy to see them... In fact, it had already sometimes crossed his mind to give up such a plan to return to DK Island with them and better wait for the hurricanes to pass so that Mr. Pinky would take them more safely.

Suddenly, the kong children began to notice his presence and began to greet him.

"Hi, Diddy!" Ricky greeted him cheerfully along with the other three of the group.

"Hi," Diddy replied with a forced smile. He was trying to restrain himself so as not to bring out everything he heard them talk about the night before. "Do we still have to finish that ship?"

"The ship? It's already finished!" Mandy exclaimed with excitement. "Today we'll not do anything, rather we'll celebrate. And later, we'll plan our trip."

"Really?" Diddy said, pretending to be excited.

"Yeah, so today is for celebration!" Ricky added before giving him a little push. "Come on, stay with us today! By the way... where's Dixie? Ah, don't tell me that--"

"She didn't come," Diddy interrupted, suppressing his urge to yell at them, while also looking sideways at Jenny.

"Oh... because of yesterday's event, right?" Melvyn asked him with an apparent mocking smile. "Are you two on bad terms or something?"

"It's none of your business!" Diddy exclaimed, forcing a smile and raising his voice a little.

"Hey! Calm down, buddy!" Ricky replied with a laugh. "You'll fix it, and if not, you know... there are many girls in the world."

Diddy was on the verge of arguing with them and telling them the truths to their faces, but he knew that another public scandal would be made at that moment, so he just held back.

On the other hand, Dixie was also present... but hidden. She had hidden behind the bushes to see what might happen that day. She knew it wasn't right what she was doing and felt guilty about it, but she couldn't resist her curiosity to see what Diddy could do. Between moments, she also began to observe the ship, which was already finished... although Dixie didn't want to go on that trip anymore either.

Meanwhile, Diddy was still reunited with the quartet and some of the other kong children. The four had brought sweets and fruit drinks again; apparently, it was another celebration like the previous time. But in turn, Diddy was tormented by the other kong children in the herd with uncomfortable questions related to the previous day's event: they asked him if he had broken up with Dixie or if they were on bad terms because of it, or worse, if he now liked Jenny; questions that only made Diddy quite uncomfortable, and to which, he answered them with a simple "no", without wanting to give more details.

Later, Diddy went for a few sweets and then for a fruit juice, although this time... he did it looking everywhere around him, because to his bad luck, whenever he went to look for or take something, Jenny appeared to him and she began to insinuate to him against his will. Luckily, nothing happened this time, so Diddy was going to return calmly to the others... or at least that's what he thought at first.

"Diddy, how are you?!" Jenny appeared behind him, giving him a little push.

Diddy, still holding the fruit drink, began to run and walk away. But she stopped him by pulling his arm and making him spill some of the drink.

"Hey, don't go, why are you like this?" Jenny said in a mocking tone. "What? Are you in a bad mood about Dixie?"

"Urgh! It's all your fault, Jenny!" Diddy replied, pointing at her and raising his voice little by little to speak to her straight ahead. "You don't care about Dixie, you don't understand anything, you chase me every time you can, and with what you did yesterday you crossed the line, seriously! And not only you. Ricky, Melvyn and Mandy are also planning everything, *you all want to separate Dixie and me! You are fakes-*"

"Hey, calm down!" Jenny interrupted, downplaying what he was saying. "It was a single kiss, are you going to tell me you didn't like it?"

"Urgh, Jenny!" Diddy exclaimed, very angry and losing his patience. "You just treat me as if I were a toy; you think you have the right to do whatever you want with me, but no-"

"Hey, hey, *wait a minute!*" interrupted Jenny calming him down and patting him on the back. "Look, Diddy, I have only one thing to tell you: you're going to meet a lot of girls better than Dixie someday. So, it's absurd that you're just fallen for one girl and-"

"Wait, Jenny! I also have something to tell you before you repeat the same thing to me as Ricky and Melvyn," Diddy interrupted before answering with a sneer. "Get your *own boyfriend* first!"

Instantly, Jenny was furious with it and gave a couple of continuous slaps to Diddy's face.

"But why are you hitting me?!" Diddy exclaimed, pulling away the hits.

Then, Diddy managed to dodge her before she continued, and then ran out as fast as he could, although he could not run as fast because he also carried the cup with fruit juice.

"Hey! Diddy!" said Ricky and company, appearing on the way. Diddy stopped immediately, and so did Jenny. "Ahh, now you're with Jenny, huh?" Ricky added mischievously.

"*No, no and no!*" Diddy exclaimed, with his patience exhausted. "*Leave me alone! Let Dixie and me be happy! I know you four want to look us bad and-*"

"*Hey, Diddy, calm down!*" Ricky interrupted with a little laugh. "What are you talking about?! You have been very weird today!"

"What's wrong, Diddy?" Melvyn added mockingly. "Don't know whether to stay with Dixie or Jenny?"

Diddy had enough of all their distasteful comments and prepared to bring out everything he heard from them once for all.

"*All of you ...*"

"Hey, what are you doing here?" interrupted one of the other kong children, arriving on the scene.

"Nothing, we were just talking to Diddy," Ricky replied with a shrug and downplaying Diddy's mood. "Come on, let's play something!"

Diddy was exploding with anger inside. He couldn't say anything to the four of them, as more children from the rest of the herd started arriving and he didn't want to make a public fuss.

"Let's play challenges!" Melvyn suggested excitedly.

"Yeah, I think it's a great idea. Let's go!" added Ricky inviting them this time to all the boys and girls to play. "You play too, Diddy."

"Hey, first of all, do you know what day we're going to leave on the ship?" Diddy asked, shrugging and wanting a straight answer.

"Don't worry about that now," Mandy replied downplaying. "We'll plan it later. Now let's have fun."

The whole herd gathered, and then everyone sat in a round, including Diddy, who just sat watching the game while still drinking his fruit juice.

"Well, you know the rules," Ricky said to everyone present. "Whoever doesn't meet the challenge will eat five tree leaves!"

And then, just like last time, the game was carried out in the same way: they used two bubblegums to be able to choose the participant who proposed the challenge and the one who dared it. Everyone was actively involved, and most met the challenges; there were few who ate the leaves. The game was quite entertaining, much more if everyone was playing now. There ranged from challenges of strength or physical endurance to challenges of having some interaction with another participant. Diddy just watched all the challenges and that cheered him up a little bit.

On the other hand, Dixie was also nearby watching after she had left the ship, but she was obviously hiding, trying to see the game where the kong children were participating.

After several challenges later, it had been Diddy's turn to meet a challenge, and who proposed it was Melvyn, so Diddy already knew where the thing would go, so at once he was preparing to eat tree leaves.

"Okay, Diddy. Let's stop fighting and just dare," Melvyn said, challenging him. "I dare you to kiss any of the girls here now."

"Bah, forget it, Melvyn! He's not going to do it," Ricky interrupted, rolling his eyes and mockingly. "You know how Diddy is; he even on bad terms will want to be 'faithful' to his girlfriend."

"Oh, please! Let him do it," Melvyn insisted. "Come on, Diddy, take advantage now that you're free... If you want, kiss Jenny again; she loves you," he added mischievously.

Then, everyone began to encourage Diddy to do it, but he was resigned, since he already sensed that they were going to challenge him to that. He was even realizing that the attitude of his so-called friends was being quite annoying that day. Diddy, while drinking another sip of fruit juice, was about to get up to eat some leaves... But seconds later, he decided to change his mind.

"Okay, I accept the challenge!" Diddy announced, smiling firmly.

The whole herd looked at him with eyes wide open at such a surprising response from Diddy. Then, they began to murmur and show themselves with extreme curiosity.

Dixie, still hiding, was shocked to hear that about Diddy. Yes... she had just heard it just now, too.

"Are you serious, Diddy?" Ricky asked him, wanting to laugh and not believing him.

"Well, yes," Diddy replied, determined.

Everyone looked at each other confused and at the same time excited at what Diddy said, while he, for some reason, continued to show a face of being sure and determined.

"Well... if you say so," Melvyn said, shrugging and smiling, still not wanting to believe it. "Now choose which of the girls you'll kiss."

"Jenny!" Diddy pointed at her almost instantly.

Everyone screamed in shock at Diddy's response; that fact they didn't expect. Those in the quartet were confused and, at the same time, laughed at the astonishment as well.

Dixie, on the other hand, had become paralyzed and felt it start to burst inside. She wanted to get out and confront the situation, but she better hold back and decided to keep watching, even if she feared the worst.

"Are you okay, Diddy?" Mandy asked, looking at him strangely.

"Do you really plan to do it, Diddy?" Jenny asked, smiling and confused. "I haven't told you anything now."

"Yes, Jenny, isn't that what you wanted from me?" Diddy replied defiantly. "Now come here."

Jenny looked at him with enormous confusion trying not to laugh, but without thinking more, she walked towards Diddy and sat down in front of him.

"Well, Jenny, now close your eyes," Diddy said in a mischievous tone as he kept in front of her.

"Okay," Jenny replied, shrugging and smiling.

Everyone was extremely curious, and watched with total attention the shocking event that would be about to occur. Meanwhile, Dixie, from her hiding place, only trembled and covered her eyes so as not to look, but at the same time, she also wanted to look.

And then, Diddy with Jenny started to get closer and close their eyes... But then, Diddy opened one of his eyes, picked up his cup of fruit juice, and poured it straight into Jenny's face, making her react instantly.

"*URGH, STUPID MONKEY!*" Jenny shouted, wiping her eyes.

"*Goodbye!*" Diddy exclaimed quickly, before getting up and running.

"*HEY, YOU HAVE TO RESPECT JENNY!*" Ricky and Melvyn exclaimed, going to chase him.
"*COME BACK HERE!*"

Diddy was running as fast as he could as he laughed out loud along the way at the trick he had just done. It was obvious that he wasn't going to dare such a challenge, but he felt the need to do something against it as the group of his "friends" did with him and with Dixie. Meanwhile, Ricky and Melvyn were following him, and then several kids of the herd joined in the chase.

On the other hand, Dixie only felt enormous relief to see that it had only been a bad play by Diddy. She was going to stay, but she decided to run to the house before Diddy could notice her...

Chapter 51: An Arrangement... and Another Revelation

Chapter Notes

Extensive chapter.

Later, after so much escape, Diddy headed back home. Minutes before, he had to hide until the quartet along with the rest of the herd of children lost sight of him, since they wanted to go against him after the move he had made to Jenny.

On the other hand, Dixie was still running home. She managed to see Diddy arriving at it, so she had to speed up more to get there before him.

Diddy was one step away from going upstairs, when suddenly, he met Dixie head-on by surprise. She was tired of running and didn't know what face to make, as she hadn't managed to arrive before Diddy. In fact, both of them didn't know what to say or what face to put on at that time. Diddy noticed Dixie showing herself with fast breathing due to the hustle.

"Uhh... Hi, Dixie!" Diddy said with a nervous smile. "What are you up to?"

"Uhh... Nothing... I just... went for a walk," Dixie replied, trying to hide everything and break the ice. "Oh, and... How did it go there? Is the ship ready?"

"Well, yeah, everything is ready," Diddy replied, still with some nerves, but trying to talk to her normally. "But you know? *Those*... I don't even know what to call them now. Instead of planning everything, they started celebrating and playing," he added before starting to laugh when remembering the last thing. "And you don't even know what I did."

"What?" Dixie asked, trying to stay serious, but then she knew what Diddy meant, and she also started to laugh.

"We played that same challenge game again, and..." Diddy replied, trying to stop laughing.

"Jenny?!" Dixie added, starting to laugh too, but instantly, she realized that she gave herself away, so she fell silent.

"Huh? Yes, how do you know?" Diddy asked, stopping the laughter in his tracks as well.

"Uhh... It's that..." Dixie didn't know what to say now. "Ah, really? I think I guessed," she added with a forced smile, trying to deflect the topic.

"Did you go there too?" Diddy asked, giving her a strange look.

"Uh, no, of course not! I just..."

"Oh, admit it!" Diddy said, wanting to laugh again and giving her a little push, before letting out his laughter. "You had to see it!"

"Oh, okay! Yes, I went... I did see everything," Dixie replied with a little embarrassment and seriousness this time. "I'm sorry... it's that, you know... I just wanted to make sure *everything* was... *okay*."

Diddy stopped laughing, at the same time that he felt worried about Dixie after hearing that answer. Then, he remembered that they still had to clarify everything and should fix things as soon as possible.

"And... do you feel better right now?" Diddy asked, smiling at her with some insecurity. "Do you want to go for a walk for a while?"

Dixie, although no longer upset, agreed to go with him and be able to clear things up. She was also very ashamed that she hadn't believed Diddy, even though he had always given her reason to trust him. Along the way, they were talking about everything that happened in the meeting and, remembering the last event, they let out laughter. After several minutes of walking, they went to sit next to a fallen tree trunk, still laughing.

"... And everyone thought you were really going to do it!" Dixie said, trying to stop laughing. "Oh, no, I shouldn't laugh at Jenny, poor."

"Bah, though she and the other three laugh and make fun of us anyway," Diddy added, shrugging and laughing again along with Dixie.

They both continued to laugh out loud nonstop at Diddy's play on Jenny. They felt a little guilty too, especially Diddy, but at the same time, they were very amused; they felt that this had been some kind of revenge in a way.

But after a few minutes of laughter, they both knew they had to get serious so they could talk things out clearly. Diddy took courage to be able to touch the topic they had to solve.

"Uhh, Dixie... aren't you upset anymore?" Diddy asked with some insecurity.

"Well... no, I don't have to be," Dixie replied, smiling at him. But then, she was a little sad and embarrassed by what happened. "Oh, Diddy... I'm really sorry for not believing you yesterday at first, I mean... I did believe you, but seeing that with my own eyes made me feel very bad."

Remembering that, Dixie felt almost the same as she did at that moment again, so she just took a breath. Diddy felt very sorry for her; he never wanted to make her feel that way, much less if he never had that intention. He got closer and settled in front of her so he could talk to her better.

"Dixie... I'm so sorry you felt that way," Diddy said, trying to comfort her. "Jenny doesn't understand, or rather, *doesn't want to* understand, not even because we have both explained to her. And you know I'd never do that to you... Sorry if it happened, Dix."

"No, no, you don't have to apologize for that, Diddy... It really wasn't your fault, it's not," Dixie replied, placing a hand on his shoulder. "I know it was Jenny to blame, she did it," she added earnestly, but then looked down again. "And it's just Jenny... I came to consider her a lot, as a good friend... But I don't think I'll see her like that anymore," she added, folding her arms before continuing. "I can't anymore... I can't stand how she tries to approach you, let alone last night... I did want to believe you, Diddy, it's just that... I didn't want to be wrong either and I got that insecurity for having seen it, because really... I have been afraid that you'll give a chance to her... even if you've always shown me that you don't."

"What?" Diddy said, looking at her with some strangeness for what she said. "Hey, no, I said I'd never do that to you, Dix, why did you think so?"

"Ugh, it's that... it's just that I couldn't help it," Dixie replied with discomfort to be honest. "I mean... I know you've proven that you'd never do it, and I've also tried to pretend that I don't care and that I'm strong, but... sometimes I can't anymore, and actually... it does annoy me."

Diddy felt bad about Dixie and how she spoke. He even felt worse after hearing the last thing she had just told him. But before long, that expression of hers... reminded him suddenly of himself a little more than a couple of months ago.

"Oh, Dixie... I think I understand how you feel anyways," Diddy said with a low look. "I've felt that way too, you know, because of... Jemky... I couldn't stand how he tried to get close to you either, I was very upset about that, and I've even been afraid that something would happen between you and him... even if you proved it would never happen. And at least you can now express it... On the other hand, I couldn't back then. And you can't imagine how terrible I felt when I thought you dated him; and when you told me we wouldn't be friends anymore, it was worse. But... I couldn't do anything anymore, I just tried to accept that I wasn't going to have a chance with you anymore, even if it was what I wanted most... And well, so don't feel bad about feeling that way, Dixie," he added, smiling back a little and holding her hand. "And it's okay, you can tell me how you're feeling; never hesitate to do so."

Dixie was pensive for a moment after what Diddy said; the latter words made her feel better and she smiled at him again, even though she still felt somewhat embarrassed. But suddenly... her face changed back to a low and even worried expression, which earned a look of strangeness from Diddy.

"Diddy... I'm really sorry," she said, showing a little worry. "So, that's how you felt about Jemky's matter?... Oh, no, forgive me, Diddy!" she added quickly.

"Hey, don't worry, that happened a long time ago," Diddy replied with a slight laugh and shrug. "I mean, we are both already together and happy to be; no need to worry. Besides, Jemky was the one who forced you to tell me that that time, wasn't he?"

"It's that it wasn't exactly like that, Diddy. I mean... He did threaten me, but at first... It wasn't a serious threat as such."

"What?" asked Diddy, suddenly confused by what Dixie had just said. "What are you talking about?"

"There's something that... I didn't tell you about that time, Diddy," Dixie revealed, which began to confuse Diddy more.

"What are you saying?" Diddy said with a confused look. "I don't understand, what are you talking about?"

"It's that... the time you invited me to the waterfalls... I had made a stupid deal with Jemky... to pretend that we were dating and so you would be encouraged to confess to me."

Suddenly, Diddy began to change his face again. He felt a small inner blow with what Dixie had just revealed to him; he didn't know what to say to her and just stayed still for a couple of seconds as he began to think too many things.

"W-what?! What are you saying, Dixie?" Diddy stuttered without processing. "How's that?"

"It was something stupid," Dixie replied, embarrassed, even not wanting to look at him. "All because I didn't know how to take a first step with you without being direct... He wanted to make a deal with me, and I... I accepted it."

"What did you say, Dix?" Diddy exclaimed, still not knowing what to think. "B-but what did you do? What actually happened?"

Indeed, what Dixie said... *it was true*; it was a small detail of the facts that she hadn't told and that had been on her mind during that time. She needed to tell Diddy somehow, but was afraid of how he would take it at the time. Still, after understanding the situation, she decided it was time for him to know.

"It's that I..." Dixie replied, still embarrassed, "at that moment, I was upset with you because you always denied that you liked me and never understood my signs. And then, Jemky proposed a deal to pretend in front of you that we were dating, in exchange for me giving him the emerald... And, although I didn't want to accept it at first... I ended up accepting it."

Diddy was shocked and silent for a few seconds as he tried to process what Dixie revealed. That revelation was never seen coming, and he had even become more confused than before.

"What?!" Diddy exclaimed with an expression of strangeness. "Hey, what are you telling me, Dixie? So, you..."

"I didn't know how to get close to you at the time!" interrupted Dixie, trying to stay serious. "I didn't know how to tell you directly and take the first step, and you even denied it with disgust, when I knew you liked me."

"Oh, but Dixie!" Diddy exclaimed, looking at her seriously. "Obviously, I wasn't going to say in front of you that I did like you, and I couldn't measure my words back then."

"I know! As I told you: it was something stupid... Only back then, I didn't know what else to do, and I believed that fool that it would encourage you to confess to me."

"Anyways..." sighed Diddy, still looking at her seriously. "How was it all then?... What about what you did to Jemky? And about the pyramid and all that?"

"Well..." Dixie replied after heaving a sigh, "it's a long explanation..."

It all started that very day when you had invited me to the waterfalls. I was upset back then because I knew you liked me, but you just pretended not with all disgust.

"No, no, it's that... I just don't feel like hanging out today," Dixie said, looking at Diddy, with a hidden frustration after he invited her out to the waterfalls. "Or we can go another day."

"H-hey, no, what do you say?" Diddy replied. "Today I wanted to... show you something important. Could you go today, right?"

"Well, not now..." Dixie replied, still hesitant, but then trying to smile at him. "Or well... Okay, better yes. Let's go today."

"Okay, then see you later, Dixie," Diddy finished, smiling at her.

Diddy said goodbye and went home. Dixie stared at him, while feeling a little frustrated that time about the way Diddy acted with her regarding her feelings.

I was sure you liked me, but I also thought that maybe you weren't as interested as I was and didn't want to take the first step with me.

"That dwarf monkey still doesn't tell you a *little love secret*?" said Jemky, appearing behind Dixie with a few small laughs. "That monkey doesn't love you; he's a coward and doesn't look interested in you, don't you think?"

Dixie turned to look at him in disgust, and then looked back at Diddy walking away into the distance, before breathing a sigh of frustration. She started walking to leave too, when suddenly, Jemky stopped her.

"Hey, Dixie," he called her. "By the way... I wanted to talk to you about something."

"And now what do you want?" Dixie exclaimed reluctantly.

"Well, you'll see... I was going to propose one thing to you."

"There aren't any dates!"

"No, no, it's more about something I told you a few days ago," Jemky said with a curious look. "It's about... the emerald that Diddy has in his pyramid."

"Again?" Dixie replied, looking at him strangely. "How much interest do you have with that emerald?"

"Well, I have a better proposal for you. You see: you give me that emerald, and... *I'll help you with the monkey*," he whispered, smiling, and at the same time earning a look of greater weirdness from Dixie. "Yes, really, I can help you get that monkey, so that he confesses to you once for all."

"What are you talking about?" Dixie said with a mocking look. "And how would you do that?"

"You're waiting for him to take the first step with you, right? Well, I'll tell you a secret... Do you know when a boy starts to get more attentive to getting closer to a girl he likes?... When he sees and feels that he is *losing her*, when he sees that he has difficulty getting with her."

"And what's the point?" Dixie asked again, looking at him strangely.

"That I can help you with that," Jemky said with a confident look. "Do you know how?... We can *pretend* that you and I are dating. Yes, as you hear it. You're going out with him this afternoon to those waterfalls, right? Okay, so, how about we make him believe that you agreed to date me?... You'll see how he'll get and *want to come to you without thinking about it anymore*."

"Hey, what are you saying?!" Dixie replied. "I'm not going to date you!"

"I'm not telling you we'll really be dating," replied Jemky. "I tell you that we'll *fake it*, and it'll only be for this afternoon when that monkey arrives, and in exchange, you give me that emerald, and that's all; we won't do anything else, we only say that to the monkey. And by the way, if everything goes well, the four of us will give more jewelry to the two of you for your pyramids."

"And secondly... that doesn't sound like it's going to work. Nothing works," Dixie replied, before starting to walk in disgust, but Jemky followed.

"Hey, hey, but wait, Dixie," Jemky said, taking her arm. "Do you really not want that monkey to take the initiative with you?"

"Urgh! It's none of your business," Dixie replied, grumbling in frustration. "Well... Yes, but nothing can be done," she added before continuing to walk.

"So, what do you say?" he said, walking beside her. "Come on, Dixie. Look I want to help you, to have that monkey you love so much; I know you don't love me, so... why not better help you with who you love most?... You'll see how making him believe that, will make him come to your feet."

"Yeah, yeah, as if that would be achieved," replied Dixie, rolling her eyes. "So, from me, there are no fake dates and not that emerald!"

"Hey, but only it'll be to tell that to the monkey this afternoon, and that's it!" added Jemky, standing in front of her. "Come on, Dixie, isn't that what you want so much now? That Diddy confesses to you and wants to date you? That way, he won't resist anymore, he'll take courage and confess all his love for you; *he'll do anything* to have you and he won't want to let me beat him."

"You're already talking antics," Dixie replied. "Diddy won't fight for me with you because I *don't* love you."

"Exactly! It's because you *don't* show him that he can miss the opportunity with you. If you keep giving him signs, he's not going to bother to fight for you and he'll even continue to deny that he likes you... And you're sick of that, right? So why don't you make things *harder for him*? Look, I can help you with that."

"What makes you think that works?!" Dixie replied before pushing him aside and continuing to walk. "You don't know what more to invent!"

"Hey, Dixie, look... I've had a girlfriend before," he told her with a confident look. "And do you know when I was most interested in her? When I saw that conquering her was a *challenge*, when I saw that other boys wanted to win her love. Because that's what we like: the *challenging*, the *competitive*, believe me yes. Maybe that's why Diddy just pretends to be proud by pretending he doesn't like you. But if you make it difficult for him... you'll give him *right* in that pride, and he'll want to come to you no matter what, and *he won't wait any longer* to confess to you and ask you to be his girlfriend... What do you say?"

Dixie gave him a serious look, while showing her frustration after remembering that Diddy didn't take any notice of her and didn't understand her signals. Although anyway, she just hardened her gaze and continued walking, leaving Jemky behind.

"Ugh... Forget it," Dixie said grumbling, before only shrugging her shoulders. "And don't insist anymore, please. There isn't any deal."

"Urgh, you're very stubborn," Jemky replied, annoyed. "But it's okay, it doesn't matter! *You'll never* have the monkey you love so much; he'll continue to be a *coward* to you and will continue to pretend to be proud by hiding his feelings for you!"

"Yeah, yeah, yeah and so may he remain so!" Dixie replied in a mocking tone, before continuing on her way and ignoring him.

Soon, Jemky accelerated his steps towards her and stepped in front of her again.

"Or you know what?" he said with a fixed gaze. "Since you don't want to give me that emerald, I'm going to tell Diddy that you like him so he'll *continue being a coward* with you! Because that's all he would do."

"Yeah, of course, and he may not even believe you," Dixie replied in a mocking tone. "So, stop continuing--"

"Yes, I'm going to tell him! I'm going to tell him that you know he likes you because we show you his notebook with that little heart. We'll steal Diddy's notebook again and I'm going to show it to him and say *it in front of* you, so that you yourself have to confess your love at that moment, and he *is frightened and your confession is ruined!*"

Dixie just remained silent, while she began to feel some nerves at that warning from Jemky, although she tried to downplay it at first and looked at him with a bad face.

"I said there is no deal!" Dixie replied, pushing him out of her way hard, then speeding up her steps.

"Bah! So, run out of your monkey!" Jemky replied as he walked away. "If he doesn't do anything to get close to you, he never will, because that's what he always implies!"

Before long, Dixie grumbled quietly at the comment, which only reminded her of Diddy's attitude to her feelings that day. She was already moving away, while Jemky was going in the opposite direction. When suddenly... she stopped, still showing some frustration, and even admitting that she feared that Diddy would find out about her feelings the way Jemky had warned her.

"Wait!" Dixie called him, before Jemky turned to see her. "Uhh... O-okay... Let's do it."

Jemky smiled again after hearing that answer from Dixie, but at the same time, he eyebrowed up.

"Hey! But don't get so excited, because I remind you of something: *emerald in exchange*... or there is no deal, there will be other consequences and I'll make you look bad in front of that monkey."

"Yeah, yeah, I'll take it to you," Dixie replied, before looking at him harshly. "But it's all a joke, right?... Because you know I can break your face if you take it seriously."

"Hey, I'm telling you that I want that emerald in exchange," Jemky reaffirmed with a mocking look. "It's a deal. In addition... If you accept, I swear we'll never bother you two again."

"Well, so... okay," Dixie said before leaving. "Don't delay, by the way."

"Of course not," Jemky finished with a smile. "We'll meet after extra classes, Dixie... You'll see how that monkey will want to go for you once for all."

Obviously, I wasn't going to give him your emerald. So, I took any stone, painted it green and kept it in a tightly closed small box. Then, in the afternoon when we were going to the waterfalls, that happened.

"What time does that monkey arrive?" Jemky asked. That was the moment where they were waiting for Diddy. "You did bring the emerald, right?"

"Yes, I'll give it to you later," Dixie replied as she waited to see if Diddy arrived. "Here he comes! H-how do I tell him?"

"You already know: I'll hide, you tell him we're going on a date, then I'll get out and fake it too, and you play along with me," Jemky said, smiling confidently. "You'll see how he'll react; with that, you'll *leave him begging* and he won't wait any longer to confess to you, perhaps today or tomorrow."

And then you arrived and you already know what happened... I know, I was very foolish to think that that last alternative I had was going to work.

"Hey, didn't you have something to say to me, Diddy?" Dixie asked Diddy after telling him she was dating Jemky, hoping he would react somehow.

"N-nothing, forget it!" Diddy replied with utter indifference before leaving. "Hope your date goes well."

"H-hey, Diddy, wait, wait!... Diddy!" Dixie exclaimed, but he had already quickened his pace.

"Oh, leave him, pretty," Jemky said, taking her arm. "It's getting late for our *date*."

"But it's that-"

"And well... *What object* did I tell you to hand me over right now?" said Jemky, looking at her in a serious way as he held her arm. "Hmm! And it seems to me that... the trick didn't work with that monkey," he added with a mocking look.

Dixie, showing clear frustration at the failure of the plan, went to a nearby bush where she had hidden the fake emerald kept in a box, took it and handed it to Jemky very reluctantly.

"Yes! *Finally!* Our dads will be proud of us!" exclaimed Jemky, jumping with excitement and taking the box with the 'emerald'. "Thank you, Dixie!" he added, giving Dixie a sudden hug, but she instantly pushed him away in disgust. "You're the best! You should be my girlfriend instead of waiting for that cowardly monkey."

"Yeah, yeah, you can leave!" Dixie exclaimed, rolling her eyes and grumbling as she left the place. "Stupid trick of yours."

"Hey, but don't be discouraged," Jemky said from a distance as she walked away and ignored him. "Maybe tomorrow Diddy will rush to confess to you; he must have been nervous."

Then I felt very bad for having accepted that, and I could notice the next night that you looked discouraged because of me, and that's why I told you that the next day we could go to the waterfalls again. That time, I even was going to confess to you that I liked you... But everything turned out worse.

That day when they were going back to the waterfalls, Dixie was sitting on a rock waiting for Diddy to arrive. She carried in her hands a tiny box covered in pink glitter with a red ribbon, where

inside it, there was a note written by her for Diddy, which she planned to give it to him secretly to reveal that she liked him, in a not so direct way. When suddenly, Jemky appeared.

"*You!*" Jemky exclaimed, heading towards Dixie, apparently very angry. "I wanted to find you!"

"W-what are you doing here?!" Dixie exclaimed, getting up and defensive. "What do you want?!"

"Don't act crazy! That emerald you gave me was *fake!*" he replied furiously before extending his hand. "*We want the real emerald!*"

"Well, yeah! It was fake," Dixie replied with a shrug. "Did you really think I was going to hand it over to you?"

"Ah, yeah?! *So, this time you will hand it over to me!*" Jemky replied as he pulled a gun from his pockets to point it at Dixie.

Instantly, Dixie was startled and screamed as she covered her face and began to tremble in terror; seeing a gun pointed at her made her panic extremely hard that left her unable to think. She had kept the group of bullies from the school under control for a long time, so she didn't think they would be armed again.

"Oh, are you afraid, girl? What a pity you can't defend yourself this time," Jemky said with an evil smile. "Now! I want that emerald!" he added, pointing her more closely. "Nobody makes fun of the four of us!"

"J-Jemky... I-I'll g-give you whatever you want, b-but please... d-don't hurt me," Dixie stammered with all the fear she could ever feel. "And... and I don't think I can give it to you now b-because I'm w-waiting for D-Diddy. In... In fact... there he comes."

Dixie, her arm shaking, pointed to Diddy, who wasn't coming that far from where they were. She was afraid that he would arrive and see the scene. Jemky also observed him from a distance, and then smiled evilly at Dixie and pointed the gun at her again.

"Well, I don't care! This is what you'll do with him then if he sees us!" he ordered, pointing the gun at her closely. "When that monkey arrives, you'll have to tell him that you won't go with him, pretend again that we're going on a date or something to make him leave and you'll tell him that you don't love him anymore, that you won't be his friend anymore, *stomp on him!* Make him feel bad!"

"B-But what are you talking about?! I can't do that to him!"

"If you don't, then he'll pay the consequences, and *I'll shoot him right then and there!*" he snapped, snatching the tiny box she was carrying and throwing it to the ground. "Now, *the better you* do, the more likely I'm to pity you two! And play along, by the way!" he added, smiling maliciously.

Dixie was trembling and just wanted to escape from there, but she couldn't. The worst thing was that Diddy was already close and had to recover her normal posture and, of course... to do with Diddy what Jemky had ordered.

"Now come!" ordered Jemky, taking her arm to start walking with her while putting the gun in his pockets. "If he arrives and sees us, *you know what you have to tell him.*"

Both began to walk to retreat from there quickly... until Diddy managed to find them.

"Uhh, D-Dixie?"

"Oh, hi, dwarf," Jemky said with a smile when Diddy arrived.

"Uh, h-hi, Diddy," Dixie said with a forced smile... trying to sound natural.

"*But...* And now what?" exclaimed Diddy, quite confused.

That was terrible: having to tell you all that and just make you feel worse than you surely already were, and not being able to do anything about it.

"*Ugh, okay, Dixie!*" Diddy replied from a distance after 'arguing' with Dixie. "Anyway, I didn't even want to go with you today!"

All that said, Dixie and Jemky left there without discussing anything else, while Diddy stayed behind before leaving. Dixie felt so bad about what she had to say to Diddy, added to the fear she had at the time.

"He's already gone," Jemky whispered, looking at Diddy in the distance, before speaking to Dixie. "What a good performance, baby. That monkey was saved," he said, smiling and at the same time looking at her seriously. "But now: hand us over what was *pending*... I want that emerald! And for having given us that fake emerald, I'll now order you to bring me Diddy's *complete pyramid!*" he added as he pulled the gun out of his vest again to point it at her. "And from here you don't leave until you hand it over to us, okay?"

"What?!" Dixie exclaimed, looking at him with weirdness and fear at the same time. "Hey, that's not how the deal-"

"*Well, I'm who say the deal,*" Jemky interrupted, pressing the gun in a warning tone. "Now! I want those two things!"

"Uhh... but I won't be able to give it to you at this hour, Jemky," Dixie explained frightenedly. "I mean... at Diddy's house may be Donkey right now."

"Well, I'll wait for you then," he replied with a shrug. "I haven't done it, you know? And I don't plan to do it; let that grumpy teacher not even bother! I want that pyramid of Diddy; that one is well done!"

Suddenly, Mandrew, Rocky and Melenky also appeared on the scene, all also with guns in hand and with evil looks.

"Say what?!" Dixie exclaimed, much more frightened and confused.

"How are you, girl?" Mandrew said, greeting her mockingly and pointing the gun at her. "Can't you fight with us anymore and beat us down?"

"Oh, poor girl!" Melenky added sarcastically. "How vulnerable someone is when you give them orders like this."

"And well, Dixie," Jemky said in a threatening tone. "You have until midnight today to hand that pyramid over to us, or else... there will be consequences, and not precisely with you, but... *with the*

monkey," he added, making a sign of the gun and laughing maliciously. "And you can't leave! You have to stay here with us until you hand us that pyramid!"

"If you don't comply, *we'll go for that fool Diddy*," Rocky added menacingly. "By the way, that dumb owes us one for throwing our previous guns into the sea."

"And by the way, why do you want that emerald so much?" Dixie asked, looking at them indignantly.

"It's none of your business!" Mandrew replied, before giving her a little push with the gun. "Now walk!"

Dixie was completely frightened; she always knew how to defend herself and Diddy from those bad kids, but with guns in hand, it had become almost impossible.

The four of them sat on some rocks along with Dixie. All the time they kept pointing at her and watching that she didn't leave; they were like really guardians with Dixie. Long and overwhelming minutes passed for her while she was being threatened, and she just wanted to teleport from there.

Night fell and, with about three hours to go before midnight, Dixie had to go the hard way to Diddy's house. Mandrew and Rocky went up with her into the house with all the silence they could maintain, and entered through the window of Diddy's room. Dixie could observe him sleeping; she wanted to wake him up and warn him what was happening, but having those evil kids next to her, it was impossible. Dixie, apologizing to Diddy in her mind, took the pyramid and left the house, then went down and went to the evil kids and handed them the pyramid.

"Perfect!" commented the four, taking the pyramid with excitement, but speaking in a low voice.

"And now something else, girl!" Jemky warned quietly, pointing the gun at Dixie again. "Don't even say nothing of this to anyone! Or else, you know," he added, again simulating a gunshot. "And if you say any of this in class tomorrow, we'll have no problem shooting Diddy, the *whole* class... and even Mr. Pinky!" he whispered with a malicious smile along with the other three kids. "Now leave here, please. *And let no one know about this.*"

Finally, under the order of the four, Dixie ran as fast as she could to her home. She felt how her conscience weighed heavily on her with all that had been created.

The next day, it had been the presentation of the pyramids, and everything that happened that day happened. Dixie couldn't say anything to Diddy, and it was clear that he was upset with her for how she treated him. The most frustrating part was when she had to reaffirm to Mr. Pinky that the pyramid was Jemky's and not Diddy's.

"We'll take this to our dads," Rocky said at the time of leaving, pointing to the emerald.

"And finally, they will take us to hunt monsters!" Mandrew added excitedly.

"It turned out better than we expected!" added Jemky in the same way. Then, he turned to look at the entrance of the classroom. "You guys go on... I've reached you later," he told them as he looked sideways at Dixie, who was leaving the classroom.

"Huh? Hey, don't bother Dixie anymore," Rocky said, taking his arm. "We are in a hurry; our dads are waiting for us to leave."

"She shouldn't tell the monkey about this," Jemky replied, letting go. "We have to stop her."

"We just needed this emerald and that's all," Rocky replied. "Not Dixie; she doesn't even love you and she's not going to stop loving that monkey."

"That's not why, but she's going to rat us out with Diddy and with everyone. We have to scare her with another threat so that she doesn't tell them."

"And that doesn't matter!" Mandrew replied. "We aren't going to come here for a long time."

"But as soon as we get back, we'll get into trouble, and our dads could get to know," Jemky exclaimed, letting go of them. "Later I'll reach out to you."

"You're so stubborn!" Rocky replied. "Beware you lose out."

Dixie, who was ahead, was walking home as if trying to pick up her pace and, in fact, thought about heading towards Diddy's house to inform him what was happening. When suddenly, Jemky stopped her later.

"Wait a minute, Dixie!" said Jemky to Dixie, taking her arm by surprise. "*Where* do you think you're going right now?"

"Huh?! Hey, leave me now!" Dixie replied, trying to pull herself away. "I already gave you the emerald and even the pyramid!"

"You don't have to tell Diddy any of this, *by the way*," he said with a fixed and serious look as he pulled a gun out of his vest to point it at her. "And even—"

Suddenly, Dixie took some courage this time and gave him a couple of hard slaps, accompanied by an attack with her hair, and then ran away at full speed that her four limbs gave her. She ran as fast as she could until she tried to lose sight of Jemky, even if she didn't know what further action to take.

Minutes later, Dixie came up to a cliff, still having nowhere else to go. When suddenly... Jemky appeared by surprise and took her by the arm.

"*Not so fast, girl!*" Jemky told her, before pointing the gun at her again. "You don't have to tell anyone about all this."

Dixie just froze, as she looked at the gun pointed at her.

"No, don't be afraid, pretty. I wanted to talk to you about something else, actually," he said in a calmer tone and smiling at her. "See... there won't be any consequence with you telling that dumb Diddy monkey whatever you want, but how about a date, baby?" he added with a playful look. "Will you and I hang out now that that monkey won't love you anymore?"

"What?! No, of course not!" Dixie replied, looking at him strangely. "Let alone with you!"

"Come on, it would just be a romantic date," Jemky replied in a sweet tone and stroking her hair. "I just want to have a nice time with you, Dixie. I'll be a good boyfriend for you, I'll tell you everything I feel for you, I'll give you many things and treat you like a queen, not like that dumb monkey who could not even tell you that he likes you."

"No!" Dixie interrupted, giving him a push. *"I don't love you!"*

"Hey! But watch out for that attitude, girl!" Jemky exclaimed again, raising the gun at her, but then smiled at her again. "No, no, don't be scared either, Dixie, I won't hurt you. But... I can go find Diddy right now if you just decide to tell him everything, and *he would pay* the consequences no matter what, since now I know *where* he lives, and so-"

Suddenly, Dixie grabbed his arm carrying the gun and held it tight with her hands and her hair.

"What the-" Jemky exclaimed as Dixie grabbed his other arm and, with an immediate kick behind the knee, managed to knock him to the ground.

Jemky tried to get up while Dixie kept struggling and punching him to get him to drop the gun. When suddenly, Jemky made a sharp move that pushed Dixie away at once, causing her to fall to the ground and drop the gun. Jemky, being on the ground, was going to take the gun again, when suddenly... Dixie reached to grab it first and pointed at him before cornering him towards the edge of the cliff. But Jemky, although initially frightened, let out a few laughs when he saw her pointing at him, as Dixie's hand trembled while holding the gun.

"Oh, not so fast, baby!" he said as he got up and pulled another gun out of his pockets. *"Here I have another-"*

Suddenly, a loud shot rang out... Dixie hadn't had any time to react, and thought of no survival alternative but to pull the trigger. Jemky lasted barely a second with his hand on his chest, before falling backwards to the cliff, where he was scratched with sharp stones that were nearby and was covered with leaves that he had dragged, before being carried away by the current of the river.

Dixie had been deeply frozen at what she had just done. She didn't know what to think, she didn't know what to do, and not even the fact that she got free of Jemky reassured her; she just kept shivering as she watched Jemky's silhouette wrapped in leaves being dragged by the river farther and farther away. Dixie made sure no one had seen that, left the gun lying in a corner hidden at random, and then ran home as fast as she could.

"Dixie!" Tiny exclaimed when she opened the door and noticed her sister's cold and pale expression. "Why was it late for you to arrive? Is something wrong?"

"U-uh... H-hi, Tiny," Dixie replied, trying her hardest to pretend to be okay. "It's that it w-was the last day of c-classes, that's all... It's the excitement. I'm just so tired."

That day was terrible, I just got home, greeted them all there and locked myself in my room. I didn't sleep at all that night, I only had in my mind the vivid image of Jemky after I shot him... just like in my nightmares I've had about him. And the worst thing was when he was found, and I didn't know how to say that I was the one who had done that to Jemky.

"And that's what happened," Dixie finished recounting, remembering it in detail. "Actually... it started like that."

Diddy was completely shocked; Dixie had told him much of that story, but apparently, she hadn't told him that *first detail* of how it started. He was silent for several seconds not knowing what to say to Dixie, as he never imagined that everything had started as a simple deal.

"So, Jemky and those fools did threaten you and wanted the emerald with my pyramid, but ... did it all start because you accepted that deal with him?... Why didn't you tell me before?"

"I didn't know how to tell you before, Diddy," Dixie replied, looking very embarrassed. "That is, you and I were friends; if I said 'Diddy, it was actually a Jemky's deal so you would confess to me', obviously I was going to give me away... And if I told you when we were already dating, I thought you were going to take it badly and you would get angry."

"I wasn't going to be angry, Dixie," replied Diddy. "Well... the truth is that it did annoy me now because you just told me, I accept it... But I also wouldn't have had any problem with you telling me about it earlier."

"I know... But it is that..." Dixie replied with her hands to her temple, "I do not know how I could think like that at that moment. I just wanted... to take a first step with you and I didn't know how, and I only listened to absurd advice and beliefs, when really... the solution wasn't that difficult."

"Seriously, Dixie..." Diddy said quite seriously, "I don't like that you can't tell me things right, and you could tell it to me well at that time."

Afterwards, Diddy remained silent as he finished processing the situation; he didn't want to have another conflict with Dixie after all, and he knew it would be useless to continue regretting it. Later, he only gave a strong sigh before continuing.

"Oh, all right, Dixie," Diddy said with a shrug. "Anyway... all that has passed; we can't do anything else. And who do I fool? I... I also didn't know how to say things well."

"Forgive me, Diddy," Dixie replied with a low look and again looking embarrassed. "I didn't think at the time how you would feel, and maybe with Jenny's matter... I'm just paying for it now. If only I had told you directly that I liked you, instead of waiting and trying stupid tricks for you to do it, everything would have been different... *We wouldn't even be here*; we'd be happy on DK Island now... It's my fault," she said, putting her hands back to her temple, "for also thinking that I could always have those bullies under control, and for thinking only of myself back then."

"Oh, no, Dix, don't say that either," Diddy said, placing a hand on her shoulder. "See, it may have been your mistake, it is... But... it was also mine... If I had also told you in time that I liked you, it would be different... In fact, Donkey always encouraged me to tell you, or else it would be too late... and I see that it was. Oh, and you know something else?... Nor is it so much that, it's that if I *had also* reported those foolish bullies in time, *nothing*... absolutely *none* of this would have happened... Oh, I don't know what to do either!" he also finished with his hands on his temple.

"It's that... we can't change anything either," Dixie added, before folding her arms and lowering her gaze. "We only have to... recognize how it all went... and face these consequences that have occurred so far," she added before sighing. "Oh, Diddy... and I always told you that you should report those fools, when I... also didn't know how to speak things well."

Both of them remained silent as they thought about the situation, although they didn't even know what to think now. Diddy stood back to Dixie's side and they stood alone in silence doing nothing. Actually, neither of them knew what they could do after talking about the whole awkward topic in depth and, in the same way, they didn't want to have more mishaps between the two.

After a while, Diddy just turned to look at Dixie and smiled a little at her, trying to put aside any negative thoughts for the time being.

"But at least, in the midst of all this... we did manage to be together, Dix," Diddy said, smiling a little again and trying to get things back on track. "Maybe not on DK Island as we thought and wanted, but still... we are," he added before taking her hand.

Dixie turned to look at him for a few seconds as well. Then, having nothing else to do, she smiled back and embraced him with all the affection she had for him; she wished more than ever to go back two months and have done things a little better. Then, Diddy reciprocated the embrace in a loving way and, after that, gave her a kiss on the cheek; they remained embraced for a minute. Diddy also wished he had done everything right when they were on DK Island, starting with not hiding Donkey about his bad classmates.

But anyway, Diddy and Dixie knew that they couldn't change anything anymore, and they only had to remedy things as far as their possibilities were reached.

"I love you, Dix," Diddy said as he held her. "And the truth is, I want us to stay together... and be forever... and in the midst of all this."

"Me too, Diddy," Dixie replied in kind. "I always loved you, and I feel like I'm going to love you forever," she added as she leaned on him and hugged.

"I wish I had stayed like this with you on DK Island," Diddy added, still close to her and stroking her hair. "I can't wait for the day when we can return and... fix everything for real."

"So do I," Dixie replied, smiling back, but then she was a little sad. "There isn't a day that I don't think about DK Island; I always wonder mostly about Chunky, Kiddy and Tiny. I just hope to see them again and that they're well... I don't want them to think I'll never come back."

"The same with me," Diddy added in the same tone. "I miss Donkey terribly; every night at bedtime, I wonder if he is still looking for us or if he has already given up... But the time will come when we can leave here, there is little left, and I hope that everything will be fixed... And I hope we can get things right."

"By the way, Diddy... I need to tell you something," Dixie said, suddenly breaking away from the hug and speaking seriously. "I... I don't want to go on that ship we built... Not with *those* who call themselves our friends."

"Well, the truth... *neither do I*," Diddy replied, stiffening his gaze as well. "I want to return to DK Island now, but not with them; they're *fake friends*. In addition, they'll go with all their old friends; surely there they'll want to get us into another scandal along the way."

"Maybe they want to do some evil to us," Dixie said, rolling her eyes. "Maybe they don't even take us to DK Island; they just want to make fun of us."

"I wouldn't be surprised," Diddy said with a shrug. "Starting with Jenny and then the others making a fuss to make us look bad... You're right, we have to do something to desist from going with them."

"Well, so... how about we tell them we won't go with them?" Dixie suggested, to which Diddy agreed.

"For me there is no problem. In addition... we're going to tell them this very afternoon. With what Jenny did and with what I heard them say last night, their friendship died for me."

"Did they really say all those things about us?" Dixie asked with some indignation.

"Believe me, if you had listened to them too, it would make you want to go out and confront them," Diddy replied, rolling his eyes, before changing the topic as he recalled a detail. "Oh, and right, Dix, I have news for you," he said before pulling a letter out from under his cap and handing it to Dixie. "This letter was sent by Mr. Pinky; he says he has to stay until next week. So, apparently, nothing bad has happened to him."

"What?" Dixie exclaimed as she read it and gave it a look of surprise. "Is it really Mr. Pinky's? Where did you get it from?"

"This morning when I left, a mail courier ape arrived and handed it to me. He said that Mr. Pinky also told him the same thing that the letter says; he asked about us."

Dixie stopped to read that letter that had been sent by Mr. Pinky, causing her to smile as well.

"Well, then it means he's all right; in the end he did have to stay more days there," Dixie added, smiling with relief as she finished reading the letter, before then questioning. "Wait, are the mail services mentioned by Mr. Pinky already enabled?"

"It seems so," Diddy said. "I just found out about that."

"So... couldn't we send a letter to DK Island to tell everyone there that we're fine?!"

"I have no idea how that service works on this island," Diddy replied pensively. "Although I don't think it can be done now because of the hurricanes; the letters can't reach DK Island."

"Oh, you're right," Dixie said, disappointed at recalling it, before continuing. "Well, so, we'll go later to see those four to tell them that we won't go with them anymore... Now I think we have to go for something to have lunch."

Chapter 52: Is That What Friends Are For?

In the mid-afternoon, Diddy and Dixie were on their way to the house of their group of... *friends*? Both had decided that they would definitely not go with them to DK Island anymore... nor did they intend to remain their friends because of the bad attitudes they had had with the two of them.

They also passed by where the ship was, which was already ready, and stopped to observe it in detail. But at the same time, a feeling of indecision was being generated in both of them: they had worked that ship until they got tired; desisting of going on it also meant to have wasted whole days of effort.

"Don't you feel pity or something?" Diddy asked as he touched the walls of the ship.

"Maybe a little," Dixie replied, crossing her arms. "But then I remember that we built this with fake ones and it completely shakes off."

"I feel like we threw away hundreds of hours of work," Diddy added, still watching the ship. "Although the trip would be exciting if they had behaved better with us."

Then, they continued on their way and headed to the quartet's house. But first, they had to plan how they would be told that in the best way without the four of them reacting badly, besides they had to prepare to see them again, since the last meetings with them had not been so good.

"You talk to them first," Diddy whispered as he was about to go upstairs to the house.

"No, no, we'll *both* talk to them!" replied Dixie quietly.

The two climbed up until they reached the door of the house. It would be a somewhat awkward meeting, and at least they hoped that everything would happen calmly and the four of them would take it in the best way they could.

They were going to knock on the door, when suddenly... they managed to hear some additional voices inside along with the four of them. Apparently, they were talking to some of the other kong children in the herd... In fact, they could hear them laughing out loud. Diddy and Dixie managed to hear certain words that caught their attention, so they became curious to know what they were talking about. Both beckoned to silence, and then stood with their ears glued to the door so they could hear better.

"I really can't stand them, they're ridiculous," Ricky was heard speaking.

"Exactly, the two of them think they look good together," Mandy added in a mocking tone. "But no, they're pathetic."

Diddy and Dixie looked at each other with an expression of seriousness at what they heard; it was almost entirely likely that they were referring to the two of them. In addition, they listened as the rest of the kids laughed with each sentence that the four said.

"Hopefully one day they'll cheat on each other, fight and break up!" said Jenny in a tone of disgust. "It's that Dixie is also very dumb; she should have better boyfriends; she only walks after that stupid boyfriend she has."

"Yeah, and Diddy is another dumb," Melvyn added in the same tone. "For him there is only Dixie, he knows no better girls than Dixie. '*Oh, no, let Dixie and me be happy*'," he said, imitating him and making the rest of the kong children laugh.

Diddy and Dixie were completely outraged now. Indeed, the group was talking about them. Both were so enraged that they were consumed by the desire to suddenly enter the house and confront them, but they wanted to keep listening to find out what else they were talking about them.

"'My name is Diddy, and I'm a leaf eater'," Ricky imitated him exaggeratedly. "'I'd rather eat a whole tree than kiss another girl other than my girlfriend Dixie because I feel like I'm cheating on her'."

"Wait, wait, I have a better one!" Mandy interrupted with a laugh. "'I'm Dixie and I believe my boyfriend, and not even because he kissed Jenny, I'll stop loving him'."

Both of them, still with their ears glued to the door, were cursing them in their minds. The impulse of wanting to enter the house by surprise won them, but curiosity won them much more.

"They're a couple of kids in love who just make us cringe," Ricky commented mockingly. "Not even with that trap we set for Diddy yesterday so that Jenny would kiss him, they broke up. I even swore that in this afternoon's challenge he would kiss Jenny, but that scoundrel monkey just got away with it."

"None of our traps have worked for us," complained Mandy. "Last night's trap didn't work for us, the challenge games didn't work for us, and the carnivorous plant we put in the gift that time didn't work for us either!"

Those last words left Diddy and Dixie in total froze; now they didn't even know what to think of them... *Had they heard about a carnivorous plant?* They both only thought like a great friendship they had had all along with that group, it had only been just falsehood.

"But this one we have prepared *for them is going to make them break up*," Jenny exclaimed firmly. "Surely those two stupids will come tomorrow to ask us when we'll sail the ship."

"Tomorrow will be a great day!" added Ricky with excitement before speaking the other kongs. "Well, you know our plan for tomorrow and what you should do. You just play along as usual and, with this plan, that pair of fools will break up no matter what."

"And all their ridiculous love will be over with everything!" Mandy finished with a sly laugh.

Diddy and Dixie continued with their ears glued to the door, but then heard their voices more closely accompanied by a few footsteps coming, so they immediately retreated and hid around the porch of the house.

Then, the other kong children got out of the house along with the quartet accompanying them, still commenting on their alleged plan that they mentioned recently. Diddy and Dixie, on the other hand, looked out of that corner of the house to look at them, in turn they made faces of contempt and mockery to the four while they didn't see them, because all that friendship they claimed to have had was completely bankrupt.

The other kongs who were with the four of them, headed down from the house, so Diddy and Dixie had to come down too, and they had to do it as fast and stealthy as possible so as not to be found

out.

The quartet re-entered their home after saying goodbye, and the others left. Meanwhile, Diddy and Dixie went to hide among the branches of another tree... They had to finish processing everything they had just heard from those four who always claimed to be their friends. From the branch of the tree, they stared at their house while a deep indignation consumed them inside.

"Urgh... They are... *first class fake ones!*" Diddy grumbled, stomping on his cap with all the anger he felt.

"*Ungrateful hypocrites!*" added Dixie, also furious. "And after all we've done for them!"

"Ah, but I wish they also told the others how we rescued them the time we met them," Diddy said wryly as he put his cap back on. "*Hopefully* they'll also talk about how we help them with their house."

"And how we treated them and went out to play with them," Dixie added in the same tone. "And how we helped them with their ship! How we were their friends!"

"They're double-faced!" Diddy exclaimed furiously. "And all the time they called us 'their best friends'."

"And now it turns out that they were also the ones who had put that carnivorous plant in the gift you gave me?! It means... were they already fake ones from before and wanted to make us fight?"

"I should have guessed," said Diddy, looking hatefully toward the house of the four. "That had crossed my mind at that time of the carnivorous plant, but I didn't imagine that it would be true, *I didn't expect it* from them!"

"And besides... are they planning to do us *another* evil thing?" asked Dixie before grumbling and rolling her eyes. "As if we still wanted to go on their stupid ship... Urgh, out of respect for their allergies I wouldn't throw all four of them into the water!" she added grumbling.

"You know? I'm curious to know what they're planning now," Diddy said pensively.

"Me too. They even think we'll come tomorrow," Dixie added in the same tone. "What if we find out?"

"I say let's go into their house and tell them all their truths," Diddy replied with his arms crossed, "that right now let's grab them red-handed."

"I don't think it's a good idea, I'm sure they'll play the victims as usual... Hey, what if we asked those kids who were talking to them? It seems that they'll also be their accomplices."

"They won't want to tell us, Dixie," Diddy replied with a shrug. "They're friends of those four... Not of us, because from what I see, they're on their side too and play along."

"But they're very gossipy; surely, if they see us, they'll want to tell us immediately."

"And besides, if they can tell us, they could also tell the four of them that we were asking them."

"I know, but that doesn't matter anymore. Anyway, this 'friendship' is already underground ground."

"Well... Maybe it can be tried, although I'm not sure if it'll turn out well."

Diddy was not so sure about going, but the curiosity was also enormous, so he went along with Dixie to the area where the booths of the other kong children were located, which were not so far from there.

When they arrived, they hid behind the bushes and looked for the children who were talking to the four of them recently. When they found them, they went to them, making sure that no one else saw them.

Dixie whispered to them, to which the children turned and were surprised to see them before they started talking loudly.

"It's Diddy and Dixie--"

"No, no, no! Silence or we will be found!" Diddy interrupted, beckoning them to shut up.

"*Listen to us,*" Dixie told them, calming them down too. "We want to know... what is Jenny, Ricky, Melvyn and Mandy's plan for us?"

"A plan?" the kong children asked, looking at them strangely. "What are you talking about?"

"Don't pretend to be crazy, *we were listening to those four,*" Diddy said, staring at them. "What do they plan for us tomorrow?"

"If you tell us, we'll give you a banana cake just for you," Dixie suggested.

"What?!" Diddy exclaimed at Dixie's suggestion. "No, that's n--"

"Yes, we'll do that!" Dixie interrupted, nudging Diddy to play along. "Come on, tell us, we won't tell those four you told us. We'll stand by you."

"Are you serious?" one of the children asked them, looking suspiciously.

"Yes, of course," Dixie reaffirmed, staring at them. "So, tell us, please; we heard them recently so clearly."

The group of kong children all looked at each other in confusion, but after hearing Dixie's suggestion, they smiled at them and were determined.

"Well... We'll tell you, okay?" one of the children replied, making Diddy and Dixie excited. "Come, come closer. What they plan is..."

"Wait, wait, wait!" Diddy exclaimed, laughing out loud. "Do they really think that's going to work for them?!"

"Even the carnivorous plant was better!" Dixie replied in kind.

Both were back on the branches of the trees, laughing nonstop until they felt pains in their stomachs, after having heard the supposed plan that their so-called friends had for them.

"Anyway, it's almost the same," Diddy said, calming his laughter. "It all will end with me being with Jenny and then everyone starts crowding together and believing it... I'm coming to think that Jenny just does everything on purpose."

"They don't know what to invent anymore, now I know that trick of theirs," Dixie added, still laughing. "They're crazy! They call us ridiculous when in fact *they* are. They have nothing better to do."

"And well, this confirms and reconfirms their falsehood that they brought with us."

"Hey, I was thinking... what if we ruined their plan?" Dixie suggested playfully.

"What?!" Diddy exclaimed with a look of surprise. "And how will we do that?"

"Well, I say to make them believe that their plan worked for them and then tell them that we knew it all the time, *in front of everyone*."

"Ohhh!... That sounds good," Diddy replied pensively and started to smile. "And make them look bad in front of everyone as they have done *to us*."

"Exactly!" Dixie exclaimed with a sly smile. "I don't know if that's correct, but... I need to do it!"

"So do I," Diddy replied in the same tone and holding Dixie's hands. "And prove to those fake ones that they cannot separate us!"

"Yes! I already want to see the faces of those four of them!" Dixie exclaimed with excitement. "They would go crazy!"

"By the way, why did you tell those other kids that we're going to give them a banana pie? They'll believe it!" Diddy said, changing to an alarmed tone.

"But I was serious," Dixie replied with a laugh. "Don't worry, we'll check Mr. Pinky's recipe books; it'll be a simple cake."

"Uhh... Okay, it doesn't sound bad either," Diddy replied with a shrug before smiling. "Well, then we must think about how to ruin the trap for those fake ones."

"And we have to think it through," Dixie added pensively and smiling maliciously. "So that in the end they're the ones who look bad..."

Chapter 53: A Foiled Plan

The next day had arrived. A new week began and, of course, it was a day to ruin traps. Diddy and Dixie were walking to the ship's site. Diddy also carried in his hands a plate with a banana cake that they had both prepared for the kong children, who had provided them with information about the trap that their so-called friends had for the two. Obviously, they had been guided by Mr. Pinky's instructions... Even though it hadn't looked quite right.

"Do you think they'll like it?" Diddy asked, looking with a forced smile at the cake, which had a not-so-aesthetic appearance.

"At least it tasted good," Dixie replied, smiling insecurely, too.

Being nearby, the first thing they did was to find the group of kong children and hand them the cake, being very careful not to be seen by anyone else. Then, they began to head towards where their so-called four friends would be to implement the plan, but not before giving the reminders.

"Well, you know: just as we planned," Dixie said to Diddy quietly. "You flirt with Jenny and tell her that you love her and that you'll give her a chance, while I go with the other three to get to you and there we'll pretend to fight as they expect us to."

"Okay," Diddy nodded, smiling and giving a thumbs up, before getting serious. "Uhh, but Dixie... don't delay, please; I don't want to spend a lot of time with Jenny."

"Don't worry, don't be afraid to defend yourself in any way if she tries to cross the line with you. Besides, everything will be fast," Dixie said, smiling confidently. "Now, let's go!"

They both high-fived and smiled at each other. Then, each of them went where they needed to go as part of the plan.

Dixie headed to where the ship was to meet Mandy, Ricky and Melvyn. She had no idea on what terms she was with them, but she didn't care anymore; she decided to show herself safely to them and treat them as if nothing had happened. The three of them were near the ship as if they were waiting for something.

"Hi, friends! How is it going?" Dixie greeted them, pretending to be happy to see them.

The three turned and were astonished to see Dixie, as part of their plan was that they would have to go find her at the house to tell her that Diddy had supposedly gone out with Jenny, and so Dixie would get angry and want to go with them to confront them. But now, Dixie had gotten ahead of them.

"Uhh, H-hi, Dixie!" each greeted her with confused faces.

"What are you doing? Have you finished the ship yet?" Dixie asked, pretending not to know anything and with a sure smile.

"Ahh, yes, of course," Mandy replied, looking at her somewhat strangely. "Hey, and you didn't come yesterday, what happened?"

"Well... I was just a little tired," Dixie replied, shrugging and still smiling.

"By the way," Ricky said with a serious look, "your boyfriend or ex-boyfriend Diddy owes us one for what he did to Jenny yesterday at a game."

"About he threw fruit juice in her face?" Dixie asked, keeping her expression. "Oh, yes, he did tell me."

"Are you and Diddy still together?" Ricky asked, also pretending not to know. "I mean... You know, because of what happened two days ago?"

"Ahh, that," Dixie interrupted, shrugging. "Of course, we already fixed things."

"After he kissed Jenny?" Melvyn asked cynically.

"Well, yes," Dixie replied with a smile and shrugging again. "He told me he just wanted to kiss Jenny, but he doesn't like her or anything, so I forgave him," she added to confuse them more on purpose.

Dixie tried to hold back her laughter, while the three of them looked at her strangely and looked confused and didn't know what to do now.

"By the way," Dixie added, beginning to set the plan in motion. "Now I'm going to have a date with Diddy. He told me he had a surprise prepared for me, so I came to ask you if... could you accompany me? Oh, and that I'll also take your old friends."

The three of them kept looking at her strangely, as if they wanted to disguise that they had the plan pending, since Dixie told them exactly what they planned to do. But anyway, they decided to go along with Dixie, since after all, it was what they wanted to do with her.

"Well... I think there would be no problem," Mandy said, looking sideways and smiling at the other two kids. "So, let's go."

Dixie and the other three set off and went to the place she indicated, where she would have the supposed date with Diddy. The three were confused, as the place where Dixie was taking them was the same place where they had planned to take her. To confuse them more, Dixie along the way was talking so good about Diddy and how much they loved each other, while the three of them just looked at her in a mocking manner as if she were a naive child, although Dixie noticed it anyway.

On the other hand, at the same time that Dixie had gone to Ricky, Melvyn and Mandy, Diddy went to the place where the whole "dramatic scene" would be. This place was well hidden within the jungle and, as expected, there was Jenny, ready to act on the plan as well.

Diddy walked stealthily near where Jenny was. She was carrying in her hands a pair of ropes, which she was unraveling. Then, though with a little uncomfortably, Diddy got out to where she was to greet her.

"Hi, Jenny!" Diddy exclaimed, making her scared and giving a jump of impression.

"Diddy! W-What are you doing around here?" Jenny asked, looking confused.

"I was just passing by," he replied, trying to stay sure. Then, he snatched Jenny's ropes in a sudden way. "Hey, what are these for? Are you... maybe thinking of kidnapping someone?"

"W-what?! What are you talking about?" she asked, looking more confused and trying to take them off, but Diddy wouldn't let her.

The other part of the plan was that, before Ricky, Mandy and Melvyn called Dixie, they were going to go first for Diddy to tell him to help them with something from the ship, but when they arrived, between the four of them they would tie him up with the ropes, and Jenny would be watching him not to escape. Then, they would go for Dixie to tell her that they had seen Diddy with Jenny.

"Well, forget it, Jenny," Diddy said, letting go of the ropes and heading toward her. "I just came to... apologize for yesterday's challenge with fruit juice."

"Urgh, very funny," Jenny replied, rolling her eyes. "You know I wanted to give you a good beating up for that?"

"No, no, no, but wait," Diddy said, calming her down and trying to act natural. "You know, Jenny? I was thinking about... give you *a chance this time*," he added with a playful look.

"Huh? Chance?" Jenny asked, looking too confused. "Do you mean..."

"Yes, Jenny," Diddy replied in a mischievous and direct tone. "Since you have insisted so much, well... what if you and I dated this time? But you know... *on the sly*."

Jenny looked at him strangely at first, as if she didn't expect that attitude from Diddy and, in a way, as if she wasn't sure if he was serious.

"Are you really serious, Diddy?" she asked in a mocking tone before crossing her arms and rolling her eyes. "Didn't you only love Dixie?"

"Oh, yes, of course I love her," Diddy replied, feigning a tone of disinterest in Dixie. Then, he grabbed Jenny's hands suddenly. "But... I was thinking and... I feel like I love you too, Jenny, even more than Dixie. You're really cute," he added, winking. "So, why don't we give ourselves a chance? And let neither Dixie nor anyone else know."

"Are you really saying that, Diddy?" asked Jenny with a mocking smile, before laughing a little. "Well, if you say so... you know I *don't have any problems*," she added in a flirtatious way and getting closer to Diddy, to which he tried to move away in a disguised way. "You know how long I've waited for you."

"Uhh, yeah, yeah, of course I'm serious, Jenny," Diddy replied with a forced smile and begging in his mind that Dixie and company would arrive soon.

"Okay, Diddy. So... how about we kiss now?" Jenny added, approaching his face with a playful look.

"Wait, wait! Not yet!" Diddy said, immediately moving himself away. "It's just... We can't kiss if you and I are still nothing."

"So what?" Jenny said with a shrug. "Didn't you say that in your first two kisses with Dixie you weren't yet dating? And besides, I already kissed you two days ago, so don't pretend it."

"Ahh, yeah... Yeah, but it's that..." Diddy stuttered as he thought about how to keep the situation under control without Jenny trying to lunge at him. "A poster! Uh... I meant, a surprise! Yes... I

have a surprise for you... Wait for me a while here; don't go."

Diddy went to some nearby bushes to look for a particular banana leaf. The last part of the plan was that: when Dixie arrived, she would find a scene in which Diddy would be asking Jenny to be his girlfriend, accompanied by a banana leaf that would be used as a poster where the well-known phrase "do you want to be my girlfriend?" formed with flower petals. Diddy already knew about this and where the poster would be, so, trying to delay a little, he picked up the poster besides a bouquet of flowers that was also there for the plan. He watched in the distance and, fortunately for him, Dixie was already on her way coming with Ricky, Melvyn and Mandy in the company of the rest of the kong children.

Diddy got out and headed back to Jenny. She, seeing him with the poster and the bouquet of flowers, was all surprised, not so much by Diddy's gesture, but rather by the fact that he knew of the existence of that poster and where he would find it.

"B-but what?!" Jenny exclaimed, all confused.

"Jenny, I..." Diddy said, trying to sound as natural as possible. "I wanted to tell you something."

Diddy, in turn, looked sideways into the distance at Dixie and company who were already nearby, so he completely showed the poster to Jenny and placed it on the ground in full view of both. Then he stood in front of her and knelt down, then held out the bouquet of flowers. Jenny was still confused, but at the same time, she was slowly smiling at what she witnessed, even though she saw how Diddy was guessing the plan.

"Jenny..." Diddy said in a sweet tone, as he kept looking sideways at Dixie arriving. "I wanted to ask you to... be my-"

"DIDDY! WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?!"

And suddenly, Dixie had arrived on the scene, to which Diddy and Jenny turned to see her. Seconds later, the other three children in the group were arriving, and little by little the rest of the kong children were also arriving, who began to catch up on the situation again.

"Uhh... *no, no, no, Dixie, this is not what it seems!*" Diddy exclaimed, pretending to be alarmed and standing up immediately.

"I... can't... believe it!" Ricky, Melvyn and Mandy exclaimed, confused and at the same time, as if satisfied that their plan had apparently taken its own accord. "This time really?!"

Then, the rest of the herd began to murmur loudly and shout uneasiness at the scene they saw. Meanwhile, Diddy and Dixie were pretending as naturally as they could, their respective expressions that they should have in such a situation: Diddy showing alarm at being found out, and Dixie showing deep indignation.

"Could you explain this to me, DIDDY?!" Dixie exclaimed, raising her voice and pretending to be furious.

"No, no, it's not what you think, Dixie!" replied Diddy, turning to Dixie and taking her shoulders. "See... I was just-"

"Uh, Dixie..." Jenny interrupted, smiling and shrugging. "This time, your boyfriend *did* look for me."

Dixie looked at Jenny, and then was furious at Diddy, before pulling his hands off her shoulders and continuing with the fake show.

"*You're a traitor, Diddy!*" Dixie exclaimed, pretending to be about to cry. "You told me you had a surprise for me and it turned out to be for Jenny!"

"A-Actually, it was for you, Dixie!" Diddy exclaimed, heading back to Dixie.

"Don't lie, I saw you in front of Jenny!"

"No, I was just rehearsing with her to tell you later!"

"*I don't want your excuses, Diddy!*" Dixie exclaimed, making feigned sobbing gestures. "*Y-you said you only loved me! This is over, YOU ARE A FAKE ONE!*"

The whole herd was tense and muttered much more than the previous times, as now Diddy and Dixie were arguing in public with each other. The group of their so-called friends only laughed quietly and, in a sneaky way, made gestures of victory among themselves when they saw that apparently their goal had been achieved.

Then, Dixie glanced sideways at Diddy, smiled a little, and winked at him as a sign to take the next step. Diddy returned the same gesture immediately.

"But... do you know who the fake ones really are?" said Diddy, smiling with confidence.

"*Them!*" exclaimed Diddy and Dixie in unison and pointing in public to Jenny, Ricky, Mandy and Melvyn.

"*What?!*" exclaimed the four, looking at them with total confusion.

The herd murmured and was now confused by the sudden turn the scene had taken; they no longer knew what was really going on. The four just stood still and with the same faces that a scammer would put on when he was caught red-handed.

"Yes, *you!* You are *fake ones!*" exclaimed Diddy, still pointing at them. "You who claim to be our 'friends'!"

"Ha! You fell into it!" added Dixie in a winning tone. "Did you think we didn't know anything about what you all planned to do to us now?! *So, take that!*"

"Hey, wait, wait, what are you two talking about?!" Ricky countered cynically, looking confused. "We had no plan against you!"

"Don't pretend!" Diddy replied firmly. "*We* ourselves heard you all yesterday talking about us and this plan you wanted to make to try to separate us again!"

"*Wait a minute...*" Jenny said, casting a withering glance at the kongs they had spoken to the day before. "*Who were the ones who-*"

"No! No one told us!" interrupted Dixie, immediately going to defend those children. "*We* ourselves heard *you* yesterday! We were going to your house to tell you that we no longer wanted to go with you to DK Island, but we just heard you behind the door tearing the two of us to pieces!"

"Hmm, so you think we're a couple of *ridiculous* and *pathetic*, don't you?" said Diddy, smiling mockingly, his hands at his sides. "Oops! I didn't know that talking like that about us, you called us your best friends," he added sarcastically.

"W-what?! *NO!*" Mandy exclaimed defensively along with the other three. "What are you talking about?! We never said that about you-"

"And wait!" Dixie interrupted, also smiling sarcastically. "So, you also think we're both dumb and should have better boyfriends and girlfriends, don't you? Oh, wow! I didn't know that friends meddled in their friends' lives."

"Ah, and you know anything else?!" Diddy added, his mocking expression. "Well, yes! I would eat *every* tree there as long as I wouldn't be disloyal to Dixie."

"And yes! I also forgave Diddy for being kissed by Jenny," Dixie added, crossing her arms and giving them a defiant look. "In fact, actually, we had *nothing* to fix since *it was you* who planned for that to happen and-"

"No, no, no!" Jenny interrupted firmly. "He himself came to me and-"

"Don't be crazy!" countered Diddy, pointing at them. "That night, after that, I came back and heard clearly how you had had it all planned, starting with that *wrench!*"

"Hey, no, what are you talking about?!" Ricky exclaimed, beginning to be furious. "You're defaming us!"

"Not at all! It's all true!" Diddy replied firmly. "The four of you wanted to take us for fools! Starting with Jenny!"

"Well, but anyway, you recently said you loved me and would give me a chance," Jenny told Diddy defiantly. "And that Dixie wouldn't find out."

"I told him to tell you that, Jenny," Dixie replied mockingly. "It was part of our plan to ruin yours with which you wanted to separate us again!"

The crowd murmured with every sentence they said, while the four became more and more silent and at the same time enraged, because Diddy and Dixie were telling them everything *just as* they had spoken it behind their backs.

"Ah, and something else!" added Dixie as a final detail. "Weren't you the ones who had put that *carnivorous plant* in the gift Diddy gave me?"

With that, the four of them finished gaping as they looked at each other not knowing what to say now. The rest of the kong children kept murmuring and looking at the scene with extreme curiosity.

"U-uh... That's not true!" Melvyn exclaimed, trying to save the argument. "Everything you are saying is-"

"Admit it!" Dixie interrupted, laughing. "You have been very fake ones all this time with us!"

"If you hate us, just say it," Diddy added with a shrug. "But don't pretend to consider us 'friends' anymore."

The four of them didn't know what to say; neither wanted to accept defeat, in fact, they never wanted to accept it, as Diddy and Dixie always ended up telling them all the truths in an argument. Meanwhile, Diddy and Dixie stood with a serene expression, even though deep down they wanted to yell at the four of them with all their might they had.

"Wait, wait!" said Ricky, stepping out in front of Diddy and Dixie. "*We have said nothing of what you are telling us!*" then, he impulsively turned to the other kong children to reproach them. "*Or who was the blabbermouth who invented those antics about us?!*"

"*Hey! Wait a minute!*" Diddy interrupted, stopping Ricky and defending the rest of the children. "Why do you want to blame them? If *we* hear with our *own ears* everything you have said about the two of us."

"Just look at how you four get!" Dixie said with a mocking laugh. "You don't want to admit what you said and besides you react badly! Don't be childish!"

"Oh, excuse me!" Mandy exclaimed wryly. "How old are you? What do I tell you, *fossil big apes?*"

"Well, at least we had never spoken ill of you!" Dixie replied with a shrug. "Wow! Are you that way with your old friends too?"

"*URGH, SHUT UP!*" Jenny shouted at them furiously. "*I don't know what you're talking about! But we haven't spoken ill of you either! YOU ARE CRAZY!*"

"*You know what?! We better finish this discussion!*" Ricky added, bumping his fists and heading along with the other three towards Diddy and Dixie. "*So, do you want to fight with us?! Because that's what I'm understanding!*"

"Oops, stay still!" Diddy replied mockingly, walking away with Dixie from them. "We never told you we were going to fight, just to tell you your truths!"

"*CATCH THEM!*" the four exclaimed, trying to pounce on the two.

Diddy and Dixie dodged them in time, and then began to run away from them, but had a hard time getting out of the scene, as the crowd of children only emitted screams of wanting to see fight. But even so, they struggled to get out of the crowd to finally run away.

"*HOLD THEM!*" the quartet exclaimed, running after the two.

Then, just like the time before, the *whole* herd began chasing Diddy and Dixie, while both went deep into the jungle and hid among the trees to divert the entire crowd that followed them.

After so much chasing, Diddy and Dixie made quick deflection movements and managed to get lost from the sight of the crowd, while they kept looking for them in vain.

Diddy and Dixie climbed up the trees, and moved away from everyone until no one could be heard near them anymore.

"Did you see how they put their faces every time we rat them out?!" Diddy said, starting to laugh out loud along with Dixie.

"And the worst thing is that *they don't want to admit* what they had said!" Dixie added, trying to quell the laughter. "Seriously, they're *cynics*!"

"Well, but at least we managed to ruin their plan," Diddy said, laughing. "And at a good time, we found out."

"We are amazing!" Dixie exclaimed in a tone of victory and high-fives with Diddy. Then, they both continued to laugh together at the play they had just made...

Chapter 54: A Friendly Ending?

In the mid-afternoon hours of the same day, Diddy and Dixie were at home cleaning and tidying up their room, as it was something they always did every beginning of the week as Mr. Pinky had indicated. Both of them were already a little calmer, as they now had information of his whereabouts.

Dixie went outside for a while to clean one of the windows, when suddenly, she could see in the distance certain known silhouettes that seemed to be heading towards the house. Immediately, Dixie entered the house again and headed towards Diddy.

"Guess who's coming here," Dixie said, rolling her eyes.

Diddy, while cleaning some shelves, turned and, from Dixie's expression, guessed who she was referring to.

"Don't tell me... It's those four fake ones, right?"

"The same. And now what will they want?" Dixie wondered.

"And what will those come to right now?" Diddy added with a look of disgust.

"No idea, but it sounds very shameless if they come looking for us... What in the world will they want to tell us?"

"If it's to apologize, I don't know about you, but I *won't* forgive them anymore," Diddy said firmly. "Not now."

"And what do we say to them then?" she added, crossing her arms.

"Well, let them go; we have nothing to say to them," he replied with a shrug. "And are they coming here exactly?"

Suddenly, someone knocked on the door continuously. Diddy and Dixie looked at each other doubtful of wanting to open, but they had no choice.

"There's no one!" Diddy exclaimed before laughing quietly, to which Dixie nudged him a little.

Both went to look out the window and, indeed, it was that group, with whom they collided with some uncomfortable looks since they were right in front of the door. After hesitating for a few seconds, both proceeded to open the door slowly, at the same time looking at the four of them with extreme discomfort, and they returned their eyes.

"Yeah?" Diddy pronounced, looking at them seriously.

The four of them had much more tense expressions than the previous time. They gave each other small pushes and gestured to each other to talk.

"Uhh... can we talk to you?" Ricky told them with a forced smile.

Both Diddy and Dixie looked at them rather oddly at the shameless act of looking for them at their house; they even didn't lack the desire to kick them out of there.

"Talk... about what?" Diddy asked them, looking at them quite seriously.

"It's only a while," Mandy replied, forcing a smile. "*Please.*"

Diddy and Dixie, almost without saying a word to them, nodded to the four of them, and then headed with them under the house to talk better... even if they didn't feel like doing it anymore. Arriving under the house, Diddy and Dixie just folded their arms as they stared and listened to the four of them.

"Hey... I know you're upset with us," Ricky told them with a low look and looking embarrassed. "But we wanted to tell you that... Well, yes... we did have that planned for you. Truly... sorry. We just came to apologize to you for all that... Sure, if you still want to."

"By the way, we'll sail the ship in four days," Mandy said with a forced smile. "We still have some adjustments to make. And we wanted to tell you that too, if you'll still go with us."

"Oh, excuse us!" Melvyn suddenly pleaded with them. "I know we were mean to you. Yes, we said all those things about the two of you and set these traps for you. But... we were thinking about it, and we really acted very badly. We wanted to know if... we could fix things with you."

"Please... we don't want to fight with you," Jenny added in the same way. "And I know I must be the one you hate the most among us, but... we promise you that this time things like this will never happen again... We want to change and be better friends for you."

Diddy and Dixie stood idly by as they listened. They were silent for a few seconds as they looked at each other not knowing what to answer them, and then looked at them. To both of them, everything they were saying seemed most blatant.

"Hey... You see," Dixie said after a while, "I... I could forgive you, but--"

"What?" interrupted Diddy, looking oddly at Dixie for what she had just told them. "Uhh... I mean, can we talk for a moment, please?" he whispered to Dixie in the last sentence.

Dixie returned the same look to Diddy, and then went with him to talk privately, away from the four of them.

"Dixie, what did you tell them?" Diddy said in confusion. "I mean, it's not because it's bad, but... this time I don't think it's a good idea to forgive them like last time."

"Why not?" Dixie replied. "It's just forgiving them, nothing more."

"No, it's just that..." Diddy sighed and placed a hand on Dixie's shoulder. "See... last time we forgave them, they told us almost the same things they're telling us now and look what happened: they *did it again*... and even worse. And not only that, but from before they already wanted to see us bad. So... if we forgive them, they could surely do it again... And likewise, things would be repeated: we forgive them and then they do some evil to us again."

"I'm not saying that, Diddy. Of course, it won't be the same as before," Dixie clarified. "What I mean is that we only *forgive them*, that is, that we'll have *nothing* against them or hate them... *But*

that doesn't mean we're going to continue to be his friends. It's just that: we drift away and already cut off all the friendship with them. Yes, I know, it's difficult, both you and I want to give them their due, but I think it's better to let them go and that's it... I think it would be the right thing to do with them."

Diddy thought about it for a few seconds as he looked sideways at the four of them, but after all, Dixie's explanation didn't sound bad at all. Then, they went back to the four of them to tell them what they had pending and make everything clear to them.

"Hey," Diddy said to the four of them. "See, I thank you for coming to apologize to us, but I also hope you know what you've done to us. And we're really sorry, but... I don't think I can go on with this. And by the way, there's another thing we were going to tell you: we are no longer going to go with you on the ship... I'm sorry. In fact, that's what we were going to tell you at your house yesterday, but to our surprise, we arrived at the exact moment when you were *badmouthing* the two of us."

"But still... I want you to know something," Dixie continued. "*We'll forgive you*. Yes, as you hear, after everything you did to us. But... We don't want to hang around with you anymore. And we thank you for your ship, but we won't go anymore; we'll wait for the hurricanes to pass. And well, of course we can continue to greet you if we see each other again, but... 'friends' we won't be anymore."

There were a few seconds of silence between the two groups. The four kids just looked at Diddy and Dixie as if they no longer knew what to say to them after what the two of them told them about giving up on staying with them.

"U-uh... Hey, no!" Ricky hurriedly told them, heading towards the two of them along with the rest of the group. "What are you saying?... We didn't have that intention of no longer being friends with the two of you... We just wanted to apologize, that's all."

"Please, we don't want to hate you," Mandy added, taking them by the arms. "I know we did wrong, we were fools, but we didn't want you to take it that way either."

"Oh, come on," Diddy replied with a shrug. "Don't you realize that all along you've wanted Dixie and me to fight? Aren't you going to tell me that you speak ill of us to all your old friends?"

"And I'm not saying we're going to hate each other," Dixie continued, "that sounds like fighting, and it's not that I want that either. Simply... we won't hang around with you as before anymore. And well... I hope you'll do well... That's all we have to tell you."

Then, both without further ado, turned around to go back up to the house, wanting to end that irreparable discussion.

"No!" exclaimed Melvyn, stopping them. "And what about the ship? Do you really not want to come anymore? Remember we did it *for you*; we promised you that we'd take you to your DK Island... as a thank you for all the good you have done for us."

"Hmm, and why don't you talk to the others about that?" Dixie replied. "You pretended to be good with us, and in the end, you wanted to take us for fools; that's not what friends do. So... at least I hope you have also mentioned the good things we did with you."

"Of course, we also tell them about all the good you've done for us," Jenny replied, looking at them with some melancholy. "Please... Excuse us."

"No, no. Get it," Diddy added, sighing. "*We are not* going to go with you. If you want, go on adventures with your old friends on that ship... But we won't accompany you anymore."

"B-but... it won't be the same without you," Ricky said sadly. "On that trip we'll miss you very much. You have given us good times, we have had a lot of fun, you complemented our group, you gave us your friendship as no one had done with us. Please... W-we promise you that this time we'll change and do things right."

"You told us the same thing last time," Diddy said, rolling his eyes. "And just look how it went."

"Don't you feel pity for... leave us and not be our friends anymore?" Melvyn added with a melancholy look, and then the other three put on the same face.

Both Diddy and Dixie, deep down, wanted them to accept everything they were told and leave, but with those expressions it only generated feelings of guilt, even though the bad guys were the four of them. Even so, they didn't want to be won over by compassion at that time and had to end the whole thing once for all.

"See... we did want to be your friends, really," Dixie told them. "You guys also gave us good times, you made being on this island more fun for us, we were very excited when we met you and we had every intention of keeping your friendship even when we returned to DK Island... But I see that you don't, you didn't see us that way, you were never real with us."

"And if you ask if we don't feel sorry, well..." Diddy added. "Yes... Yes, we feel sorry, but you also know everything you did to us. So... I'm sorry, but while we may pity you, we don't want to join you anymore."

"Let's just make this clear, okay?" Dixie concluded. "This is over on our part. But still... I hope you do well, especially on your trip, and have a lot of fun... I'm sure you'll have a great time. And be careful with the water, by the way."

With that said, Diddy and Dixie turned around again and, without further ado, began to climb the stairs.

"Hey, no!" Melvyn exclaimed, stopping them again along with the other three as they continued to apologize. "Please don't leave. We'll be better with you, we promise!"

"Don't leave us, you're our friends!" Mandy added along with the others. "And we made the ship for you."

"Dixie... Do you want to talk?" Jenny asked Dixie with a forced smile and holding her arm. But Dixie just looked at her weirdly, and let go of her in a bad face.

"Please forgive us!" Ricky continued pleading with them.

"Hey, please, enough is enough!" Diddy replied, calming them down. "Please understand that it's not. With everything you did, this has no fix."

Diddy and Dixie let go of them and started climbing the ladder again.

"Wait!" Ricky exclaimed, to which they both turned again, their patience almost exhausted.
"Really... not anymore?"

"No, friends," Diddy replied before pausing suddenly as he said 'friends'. "We won't go... Goodbye... and have a good trip."

Diddy and Dixie went up to the house, while the four of them just stared at them for a long time with sad faces when they saw that their great friendship they had had with the two had completely ended. With nothing else to do, the four began to walk away from the house, but not before turning to see them for one last time to Diddy and Dixie and, at the same time, the two of them also did the same.

Diddy and Dixie turned again and entered the house. Both couldn't deny that they felt somewhat sad about that farewell, even though it was the best thing they could do with those kids after all.

"Oh... don't you feel sorry or something?" Dixie asked with a low look.

"Well... I wish I didn't feel it... Maybe a little," Diddy replied after sighing. "But we couldn't do anything else with them; they would continue to hurt us."

"Even so... I hope they do well," Dixie added, trying to smile. "And above all, that they learn to be better friends. Perhaps they lack much learning about, after all."

"I think I'll miss them... Although I'll miss more the version I believed in when we met them."

Then, they both continued to tidy up the room while also thinking about everything they had done with their now past group of friends. They remembered from the first day that they met them, where they had been rescued and showed themselves as poor itinerant children, where soon they had become close friends with both of them, which moved them very much; they shared nice moments, they went out almost daily to play with them, they shared jokes and anecdotes, they had been a little happier to be on Hurricane Island, they believed that this friendship would be worth it... But with the latest events, the opposite was proven and, although they had already been given a second chance, they didn't know how to cherish it and things only got worse. Diddy and Dixie had treated them the best they could, but now they just thought that maybe not everyone they help and call "friends" would return the same treatment.

Later, and trying to put the issue aside, Diddy and Dixie decided to also clean Mr. Pinky's house, since he had already been away for four days. They had to be very careful, for he had several delicate ornaments in his house, which he kept with extreme care. A few minutes later, they had finished sorting everything.

"I'm sure Mr. Pinky will like it," said Diddy, observing the whole room around.

"When will he come back?"

"This week, according to what their letter said... By the way, Dix, it's only three weeks away, and we can return to DK Island!" he added, jumping with excitement.

"Hey, it's true!" Dixie replied again, smiling well. "There's very little left."

"And in the end, it wasn't that much time we had left on this island," Diddy added, smiling too, before jumping in excitement again. "We'll be back!"

"Yeah!" Dixie exclaimed, giving Diddy a quick hug. "I can't wait any longer, I already want to put my feet on the sand of DK Island, I want to see my house again and my sister and cousins."

"Same with me," Diddy added, smiling. "I want to see that island and eat the bananas from the reserve again. I want to see Donkey, I want to see them all, even Cranky."

"By the way, he and Wrinkly must be there by now," Dixie said, before smiling more calmly. "Oh, I just hope everyone is well, and that they know how to wait for us."

"Obviously they must be very worried, but I want to see their faces when they see us again," Diddy added in the same way.

"Oh, Diddy..." Dixie said, changing to a low expression suddenly. "I'm really sorry, I didn't mean to cause all this and for us to end up on this island."

"No, don't worry anymore, Dix, everything will be fixed," Diddy replied, placing a hand on her shoulder and looking at her confidently. "And there are only three weeks left, we'll be back on DK Island safe and sound, we'll see everyone again, and this time *we'll report* those four bullies from school... Well, three if Jemky maybe is... you already know."

"Oh, and don't remind me of that," Dixie said before looking worried. "I don't even know whether to wish he had survived or not."

"First we'll have to find out as soon as we return to DK Island... But hey, we'll just have to wait these three weeks."

"And that's fine, I just want to think that we'll make it safely to DK Island in the first place," Dixie finished smiling a little.

Then, both went out for a while to the porch of the house to look outside, as they used to do after long days.

"Hey, Dixie, I was thinking if maybe... we could go out, you know, a date just the two of us."

"Why not? We haven't gone out like that for days," Dixie replied with a few small laughs. "Well, what do we do?"

"I don't know yet, we'd have to think about it," he replied pensively.

"I think I have an idea. How about we make it like a surprise?" Dixie suggested after thinking about it. "I mean, we're both living in this house, but what if we make some surprise detail and meet somewhere?"

"Sounds great," Diddy replied, smiling. "And where would we meet?"

"Well... I'll leave that to you," Dixie said with a defiant look.

"What? Why me?" Diddy exclaimed in confusion. "But whatever?"

"Yes, whatever, any place that's nice," Dixie replied with a small laugh. "And I'll give you a gift and you'll make one for me, just like the one you tried to give me last time, what do you think? Of course, everything will be a surprise."

"Okay, it sounds good," Diddy nodded cheerfully. "How about tomorrow? We'll prepare it between morning and afternoon, and in the sunset hours we'll meet."

"Yes, it seems fine to me."

"And this time there will be no carnivorous plants involved," Diddy commented before laughing a little, and then Dixie joined in the laughter as well. "Oh, no, but what kind of friends did we have?"

They both went down to their room again, until later, Dixie came to mind a little off-topic idea.

"By the way, Diddy," she said after a while. "Do you remember Mr. Pinky's letter?... Do you really not think that letters can be sent to DK Island right now?"

"I don't know, Dix. DK Island is too far from here, and with those hurricanes I don't think a letter will arrive."

"But what if it can?" Dixie added, cheerful. "I want to go and see; don't you want to come with me?"

"Hey, are you sure?" Diddy questioned with a look of strangeness. "It's that it doesn't look possible now, Dixie."

"We'll just see if we can. We'll be able to let everyone there know we're okay!" Dixie said excitedly, waving him an arm. "Come on, what do you say?"

"Do you think it's a good idea?" Diddy asked, still questioning it.

"Come on, at least to ask," Dixie added with a look of pleading.

"Oh, well, okay. We'll see if it turns out," Diddy replied after thinking about it for a while and shrugging. "I think the address of that post office is in Mr. Pinky's letter, let's see it."

Chapter 55: Hurricane Island Post Office

Later, Diddy and Dixie were heading towards where correspondences could supposedly be sent. They didn't know the place, but in Mr. Pinky's letter were the indications on how to get there. They also carried some sheets and pencils to write that Mr. Pinky had given them before. They had to walk for a quarter of an hour, until they finally arrived. The site was near the beach, on a pier.

In front of them, there was a medium-sized cabin, where about three apes could be seen walking nearby, even one of them was the same courier ape who had delivered Mr. Pinky's letter to Diddy. At the top was a sign with letters that read "Hurricane Island Post Office."

Dixie immediately went to the cabin; she couldn't wait to find out if she would be able to communicate with her sister and cousins, as it was something she had needed for a long time. Diddy, for his part, wasn't so sure that could be done because of the hurricanes, but he followed Dixie anyway to find out.

"Excuse me, do you send mail to DK Island?" Dixie asked the apes at the scene.

"DK Island?... Wait a minute," replied one of the apes as he rummaged through some papers, and then pulled out a specific one. "Wow, that island is one of the farthest we have registered... In fact, no one sends mails there."

"By the way, the route that leads to that island is not accessible at the moment due to the presence of hurricanes," added another of the apes.

"So... can't it be done yet?" Dixie asked with a worried expression.

"At least, delivering the emails personally, we can't," replied the apes.

Dixie was disappointed with that answer; she had hoped that it could be sent somehow, and now she had just been told that it could not.

"Don't you deliver by submarines or light aircraft?" Diddy asked jokingly, to which Dixie nudged a little.

"In fact, we do have the submarine service," commented one of the apes, activating the curiosity of both. "We have some swordfish friends; they make deliveries in situations like this. They carry the mails in sealed boxes so they don't get wet."

"Really?!" Dixie exclaimed, her excitement returning.

"Yes, but there is a problem with that modality," replied the ape. "It's much more difficult to find the way around in the depths of the sea, so we don't guarantee that the mails will arrive."

"But then... can they?" Dixie asked with a smile of pleading.

"Of course," reaffirmed one of the apes. "They can try anyway. Just write your letters and bring them to us to pack them."

Dixie smiled as a little air of hope returned, and looked at Diddy, who was also starting to smile at that. After the information, they both walked to another corner while thinking about whether it would be a good idea to send letters to DK Island at that time.

"What do you say, Diddy?" Dixie said, looking excited. "I want to try."

"Are you sure about that, Dixie? What if they don't arrive on DK Island?"

"But we won't lose anything by trying. Come on, you can write to Donkey. I'll write to Tiny, Kiddy and Chunky."

"Well... Maybe I can. Did you bring the sheets?"

Both went to sit near some rocks while each had a sheet and a pencil to write. From what they had heard, they hoped that everyone on DK Island could be made aware that they were safe and would soon be back.

"I hope this does get to Donkey," Diddy said, smiling. "If possible, I know it'll make him very happy."

"By the way... will we tell them that we are a couple?" Dixie asked with a little laugh.

"Well, I was thinking of telling them when we get back," he added in the same tone. "You know, making it a surprise."

"Sounds good, I want to see what faces they'll make," Dixie added before she started writing, but then stopped. "Hey, Diddy, by the way... I'm going to need some alone time to think about what to write, okay?"

"Okay, Dix. I need to think about it too."

Dixie headed to another corner by herself, while Diddy stayed in the same place. Both wanted to prepare themselves so they could write the letters; they had a lot to tell their respective loved ones, and they just wanted to think that they would be okay.

Diddy, though not so sure that the letter would reach Donkey, began to get excited about being able to let him know about him. He remembered the last day he had contact with him: they had had, for the umpteenth time, an argument linked to their bully classmates from school. He wishes he had acted better, but at the same time, he knew that he couldn't do anything anymore and he only had to return to DK Island and try to solve the matter. Diddy took the pencil and began to write:

"Hi, Donkey:

I'm Diddy. I'm sure you're very worried about me because we haven't seen each other for a couple of months, but I'm fine, don't worry. I hope you also are well as everyone there.

If you're wondering what happened to me, you'll see: the last day I was on DK Island I went out at night for a ride around the sea and I was captured by circus tamers and taken to a zoo in a city, and guess who went to rescue me: Dixie! And a couple of days later, we rescued all the animals from that terrible place! As we were returning to DK Island, we were swept by a storm and took us to an island far away from DK Island, and well... this is where we are, it's called Hurricane Island.

Do you know who we found here? Mr. Pinky! And he let us stay in his house, he's no longer as grumpy as we knew him, in fact, he has behaved very well with us. A lot has happened to us, it's a long story that I couldn't describe everything to you here. I have a lot to tell you, Donkey. And about Dixie, well... I have a surprise too! We haven't been able to return to DK Island because it's hurricane season right now, but it's already ending, and in three weeks we'll be able to go. Dixie and I already want these three weeks to pass! I miss you so much, Donkey.

And by the way... forgive me for the last argument we had, and above all, for having hidden you all the time about my classmates that you suspected, Dixie must have already told you all everything, I know. I feel none of this would have happened if I had reported them earlier, but I just hope I can still do it when I get back. Sorry, Donkey, I was just afraid that they would hurt you and I was afraid of causing trouble, and please, don't go confronting those fools yet. I hope we can return well, don't worry about us, we are safe and sound.

Diddy"

On the other hand, Dixie was also writing her letter and, in the same way, remembered that day she left DK Island. She also wanted to change the whole situation, but it was too late, and she only had to return with Diddy to DK Island, even if both of them would be at risk. Anyway, she also wanted to think that her sister and cousins would be fine, and she couldn't wait any longer for them to hear about her and that in a few weeks she would be back.

"Dear Chunky, Kiddy and Tiny:

It's me: Dixie! And I'm fine if you're wondering. I'm with Diddy on a distant island, it's a long story. Yes, I managed to rescue Diddy, you don't even know what happened to him: he had been captured by circus tamers and taken to a zoo in a huge city. But that place was terrible, and I don't even tell you about those tamers yet, they were monsters with everyone. But in the end, we ended up releasing a bunch of animals and gave those monstrous tamers their due... And you can't imagine something terrible that I discovered about them.

Then, when we were returning to DK Island, a storm swept us up to this island where we are, and because there are hurricanes on the way, we haven't been able to return for three months. But it's not long now, in three weeks we can finally be back on DK Island! A lot has happened to us, especially on this island. We even met new friends... Or well, we thought they were friends of ours. We are living with Mr. Pinky, the new teacher. He lives here and let us stay in his house, he's no longer grumpy as he was before.

I really miss you very much. I hope you are well. And I hope you'll forgive me for leaving you that way. That day I left, I didn't think it would take so long to return, I just wanted to repair the mistake I made for Diddy and rescue him on my own. I really wish I could go back three months and do things better. By the way... I have something important to say about Diddy, but I'll tell you when I see you, I know you're going to get excited. I hope everyone is well there. Don't worry about me, we are fine and very soon we'll return to DK Island and see you again. I love you all.

Dixie"

A while later, Dixie had given her letter to the apes, who then stamped a seal on it, before storing it in envelopes. Minutes later, Diddy also arrived at the post to leave his letter, with which the courier apes did the same.

"Well, little monkeys. In a couple of hours, the swordfish will come and we'll give them your letters," the apes told them. "But you know, the letters could arrive as well as they may not."

Diddy and Dixie thanked the apes and said goodbye to them. Then, they were both heading to the house again.

"Did you tell them that we released the animals at the zoo?" Diddy asked her as they climbed a tree.

"Yes, and also about this island and that we are at Mr. Pinky's house," said Dixie. "Wow, I think I'm going to want to send more letters to DK Island these days, what do you say, Diddy?"

"Can more of them be sent?" Diddy asked.

"Of course. I want to come, I'm going to send more letters," Dixie said with excitement. "Hey, how about we see who gets to the house first? But without using the vines among the trees," she added defiantly."

"Agreed," Diddy replied in the same tone. "But if you also don't use your hair to get to another tree."

"Hey! That's not valid!" Dixie replied. "Or well, only if you don't use your tail to support yourself either."

"Well, deal done," Diddy replied playfully, before starting to jump into the nearest tree to start the competition.

"You're not going to beat me anyways!" added Dixie in the same way and followed the game in the middle of laughter and playfulness.

Chapter 56: A Little Date to Remember

The next day had arrived. In addition to being a new day, a new month had also begun... in fact, the last one that Diddy and Dixie would be on that island, because within three weeks it's assumed that the hurricanes would have already finished and they finally would return to DK Island. The vacations had already been spent, but at least they had been novel. On Hurricane Island they had both good and not so good times and, although they had ended a friendship with four kongs who were supposed to be their friends, they still had each other after all and could do things together.

And speaking about doing things together, that very day, the young couple of kongs had a pending plan. Both spent much of the day organizing the date they decided to have. They had decided to make it like a surprise, so each one spent time preparing the details, so they walked apart while each one did their detail for the other.

Diddy was going to be the one who would choose the meeting place, but he was so hesitant since the island had a lot of places to choose from as a romantic date, and between times he considered choosing several places. Besides, Diddy was also thinking about the details he would do for Dixie; this time there were no friends to help him, so he would have to figure it out on his own. He wished Donkey was there, as he was sure he had given him good ideas. Diddy sometimes wished he had the same romantic spirit with his girlfriend that Donkey had with Candy, but it didn't work out so easily to him. Anyway, he wanted to make Dixie smile however he could.

Meanwhile, Dixie was also thinking about what she could do for Diddy. She was better at making loving details, so it didn't take her long to think about it. She walked through various areas of the jungle collecting materials that could be used for the gift; she had considered doing something done by herself.

A long while later, it was almost time for the date... and Diddy had not yet decided the place, nor did he have any present ready for Dixie; he had so many ideas that he didn't know which one Dixie would like best. On the other hand, Dixie had almost ready the gift; it had cost her a lot of time because of the small details it had, but at the same time, every second she didn't stop thinking about what the date with Diddy would be like.

Diddy, after so much thought, was still not sure what he could do. He was beginning to despair, as the date with Dixie was just around the corner... But suddenly, an idea came to his mind that, although he wasn't entirely sure if it would be a huge detail, at least it would have a special meaning for both of us.

It was already more than half of the afternoon; therefore, the hour was approaching. Diddy and Dixie returned to the house and met again.

"Are you ready, Diddy?" Dixie asked, smiling.

"Yes... Of course, Dix," Diddy replied, scratching his head because of the nerves; it had been a while since he felt that way. "Okay, so let's go."

They both got out of the house and headed towards the place where Diddy was pointing. He didn't say which it would be yet, so it was still a surprise. Dixie, on the other hand, had in her hands the gift for Diddy stored in a box, which was also kept secret for the moment.

They walked for a few minutes while Diddy gave directions. They passed near the animal shelter, and then walked a little further, until at last they came to a place where there was a cliff overlooking the sea.

"We're almost there," Diddy said with excitement.

Diddy took Dixie to a willow tree that was on the edge of the cliff. The place was small but comfortable to spend the two together.

"Well, Dix... it's here," Diddy told her before they arrived.

In front of the willow, there were on the ground several colorful tree leaves that together formed the names of Diddy and Dixie accompanied by some hearts next to it, also formed with leaves. In addition, there were a few fruits, mostly bananas, to be able to eat both. Dixie couldn't help but smile and feel excited when she saw that detail.

"Wow... It's very cute!" she said, looking at everything with excitement. "Thank you, Diddy!"

Immediately, Dixie rushed to hug Diddy and kissed him on the cheek, which made him blush and feel the same excitement he had when Dixie did the same, the time they were going to plan the escape at the circus.

"Really, Diddy, you always manage to make me smile on these things," Dixie said, smiling excitedly.

"And I'm always glad when you smile," Diddy replied in the same way, taking her hair with subtlety.

"Hey..." Dixie said, curiously watching the site from all sides. "This place... doesn't look like we've visited it that much, but... it's known to me."

"Well, in this place... was our second kiss, do you remember?" he replied, blushing a little. "I was thinking about the idea of the place of the first kiss, but you know: we can't ride a boat on the sea now," he added, shrugging and laughing a little.

"Oh, of course I remember!" Dixie replied, laughing too, before hugging Diddy again. "Seriously, thank you, Diddy... You're so cute!" she added, taking his cheeks, to which Diddy couldn't help but smile instantly.

"And you know? This all occurred to me very recently," Diddy said with a small laugh. "I spent all my time thinking about what to do and what place to choose, but I didn't know which would be better."

"You did well, anyways," Dixie replied in kind. "Hey, how about we open our gifts now? Let's do it!"

Both went to take each of their gifts they had. Diddy climbed the tree, as he had it hidden among the branches, while Dixie was taking hers out of the box. Seconds later, Diddy came down from the tree, and then they both sat down and kept the gifts hidden behind their backs.

"Well, we show after the count of three," Dixie said.

The two counted to three, and then went on to show at the same time what each had prepared. Dixie had made a painting where she had stuck several branches and colored leaves forming trees around and, under what were the trees, she had placed colorful stones that formed the silhouettes of the two together, in addition to carrying the names of both in a corner, written with her handwriting. That detail of Dixie had left Diddy surprised, not only because it was a detail, but also because the one he had made was just a heart shaped cut out leaf where he had written the names of the two. Diddy was a little embarrassed at the simplicity contained in his detail for Dixie.

"Huh? What's up, Diddy?" she asked, looking at him strangely.

"It's that... yours is prettier and mine is not," he replied with a nervous smile.

"What are you saying? Of course it's too," she said before giving a small laugh. "Diddy, don't worry, I know you, I know you find this kind of thing difficult for you."

"But yours have been better, seriously," Diddy reaffirmed, taking the detail that Dixie had done. "Thank you, Dix."

"It's nothing, Diddy. I also thank you for your *little leaf*," Dixie replied in a mocking tone, taking Diddy's gift.

"Hey, don't laugh," he said, crossing his arms, but then he started laughing too. "At least it's not a carnivorous plant or a broken emerald this time."

Both of them laughed for a moment, and then stood side by side. Later, being a little calmer, they settled down to stay silently embraced under the tree.

"Dix..." Diddy said, looking straight ahead to her. "I wanted to tell you that... I really thank you for all the good times we've had... And about the not-so-good times, I'm also glad we were able to fix them," he added with a few small laughs.

"Oh, Diddy," Dixie replied, blushing and settling in front of him. "I thank you too... and I want us to stay together when we go back to DK Island... And I want us to be forever. You don't know how happy you've made me."

"You too, Dix... And I want us to always be happy together."

Diddy smiled tenderly at her, and Dixie returned the same expression as they both looked into each other's eyes. They no longer felt nervous as they did at first, however, being in front of each other still made their hearts beat fast and transmitted so many wonderful sensations to them. Then, both were getting closer and closer, until finally they joined their lips and joined in a tender kiss, with all the love and affection they had. During the moment, that memory of their first two kisses came to their minds; they still remembered how they had felt and all the thousands of wonderful emotions they had.

"So, it was like this," Diddy said playfully after parting ways from the kiss.

"Well, at least now we're together," Dixie replied in kind.

"By the way, can you imagine everyone on DK Island when we'll tell them about ours?"

"I need to see their reactions now," she said with excitement.

Both remained another time more embraced and enjoying the closeness of the other, that closeness that made them feel an enormous tranquility and that everything was wonderful.

"I love you so much, Dix," Diddy said as he gently took her hair and smiled at her.

"And me to you, Diddy," she replied, looking him excitedly in the eye. "I really love you."

"Hey, how about we go to other places later?" he suggested after a few minutes. "How about the lake of colors?"

"Where did we become a couple?" Dixie asked with a small laugh. "It's okay."

After spending another while, they both ate the fruits that Diddy had brought for both of them. Later, they continued with their date and then went to the lake of colors as Diddy had proposed. In that place, they remembered the day they had just started and, although that day they had also had the reprimand from Mr. Pinky for having tried to return to DK Island, the special moment where they had become a couple made them forget that.

Then, they decided to extend the date and go to other places to hang out together, or also to play and explore as they had not done for weeks. Diddy and Dixie felt like a couple of happy kids, like they had the whole island to themselves. After all, in three weeks they would be back on DK Island.

Chapter 57: Apparent Tranquility

A week later, everything had continued normally. Diddy and Dixie had had quiet days, in fact, they hadn't had days like this since their first weeks on that island. They no longer had their four past friends with whom they went out and played daily, but after all the discord they had with them, they no longer missed them so much; although they had met them by chance a couple of times, they only greeted them but nothing more, as if they were just acquaintances. Likewise, there was no longer any ship to build. It was just days of waiting for the time to come when they could return to DK Island. Even during that week, Dixie had sent a couple more letters to DK Island, even if she wasn't sure she would get a response. Diddy, for his part, didn't do the same, since he preferred to wait for a first response about the letters to arrive.

Diddy and Dixie were still waiting for Mr. Pinky; every hour of the day they peeked outside the house in case they saw him coming, but he still gave no signs. Both wondered how much he would have to do at the school he went to, since he had been away from home for more than a week.

"When is he coming?" Diddy wondered as he leaned out of their bedroom window.

"How much will he have to do over there?" Dixie said as she read a magazine, swinging in the hammock. "What if we are going to look for him?"

"Do you want to get lost on another island?" Diddy replied with strangeness.

"I was just joking, of course not," Dixie said with a small laugh, before being serious again. "What if we send him a letter to ask if he's still okay?"

"It wouldn't be bad; we could try. Although we don't know yet if the letters will arrive."

"To the island where he went, they must arrive. If you want, I can send it to him; I'm going to send another letter to DK Island later."

"Again?" Diddy asked, smiling with a look of surprise. "You've already gone to send two more these days, but they still don't tell us whether or not they arrive."

"Well, for that very reason, in case they don't arrive. Several attempts have to be made."

"Okay. Let's see if those swordfish can get to DK Island as we were told," Diddy added with a shrug. "Anyway, maybe we have to wait a couple more days for Mr. Pinky."

"Hey, and it's already more than noon hours, let's go get some bananas or something for lunch."

Diddy nodded and they both left the house to look for food afterwards; that was another thing they had to do on their own during the last week that Mr. Pinky wasn't present, although they also missed the special meals he prepared, especially on weekends.

Diddy and Dixie were sitting on one of the branches of a tree, eating a few bananas for lunch. When suddenly, a small group of the animals that were from the circus, consisting of a zebra, a gorilla and an elephant, arrived and called them.

"Hey! Diddy! Dixie!" the animals called them.

Diddy and Dixie immediately turned and were surprised to see them looking for them, since it wasn't very common that they do so outside the shelter. They both came down to talk and would think they would have something good to say... if not for the faces they brought.

"Hi! Is something wrong?" Diddy asked them.

The animals were seen with worried faces as if they had nothing good to say to them, which began to raise doubts on Diddy and Dixie.

"Uh, hey..." said the zebra in a worried tone. "It's that someone has come to look for you."

"Look for us?" asked Diddy, confused. "For *us*?"

"Who?" Dixie added, looking at them strangely. "It's not the group of friends we had, right?"

"No, no, they aren't," said the gorilla. "They are two ape kids that we have never seen and who came from another island. They say they're waiting for you on the low cliff that is meters from the shelter."

"What are you saying?" Diddy exclaimed, instantly confused. "How are they waiting for us?"

Diddy and Dixie made a gesture of extreme confusion at the same time at what those animals were telling them. They wondered at first who could have come for them to that island and in that situation.

"But who are they? What do they look like?" Diddy asked them.

The circus animals looked at each other seemingly nervous, which further confused Diddy and Dixie. They were quiet for a moment while the pair of kongs insisted that they say so.

"It's t-that one of them claims to be the..." the animals weren't seeming sure to tell them everything in detail. "Well... they're actually looking for *Dixie*."

"Me?" exclaimed Dixie with extreme confusion. "But who?! Who are those ones?"

"Could you give us more details, please?" Diddy demanded.

"J-just go see!" answered the animals, stuttering and convincing them to go and see them.

"But tell us well!" Dixie exclaimed, insisting. "How do those two kids that you say look like? Are they tall, short, gorillas, chimpanzees or what?"

"You have to see them," the zebra insisted along with the others. "Uhh... and Diddy better not go--"

"*Shut up*," the elephant whispered between his teeth and gave the zebra a little push.

"Uh, just go see those kids, little monkeys!" added the gorilla, nudging them to where they had been indicated.

"But tell us what they look like," replied Dixie, looking at them more strangely. "And why do you look scared?"

"Just go and see it on your own!" said the elephant in the same way as the gorilla.

Diddy and Dixie were completely confused and looked at the animals with extreme weirdness. They expected that maybe it was some joke or a surprise on their part, so they went to where they had been told that there was a supposed pair of ape kids waiting for them; after all, the two of them didn't even expect anyone.

Meanwhile, the animals that were from the circus stared at them both with concern as they walked away... as if it were something of importance.

"Do you think that's true?" whispered the gorilla to the other animals.

"I hope not," the zebra added, looking nervous.

Diddy and Dixie were running to the animal shelter. After all, they were quite curious to know who had supposedly come looking for them, which was very strange, since no one out of that island knew that the two of them were there. In addition, by the way the animals said it, it gave signs that perhaps something wasn't right.

Arriving near the shelter, they went to the low cliff that the animals had mentioned to them. But when they got there, there was no presence of any individual.

"This is very strange," said Diddy, looking everywhere, looking for the supposed kids mentioned by the animals. "I don't see anyone."

"I think they wanted to make a joke on us," Dixie added, shrugging. "Besides, who would come for us now?"

"Or let's ask them well what they wanted to tell us."

Diddy and Dixie downplayed the matter and decided to turn around to leave the place; maybe the animals wanted to play a joke on them as they thought. When suddenly...

"*Dixie!*" exclaimed a distant voice that, just by hearing it, both recognized it and opened their eyes with intensity.

Diddy and Dixie looked at each other quickly and turned to see who had called... Both of them almost stopped breathing when they saw who he was, because it was *someone* they never expected to find there, and they hardly knew how to react to his presence... An orangutan boy in a green vest and with a tuft on his head.

"*W-w-what?!!*" the two stuttered without recovering at all.

"*Dixie!*" exclaimed the orangutan boy walking towards them, with *a gift box* that had a voluptuous and colorful ribbon.

"N-no, no! *I must be dreaming again!*" Dixie whispered in a trembling tone, holding Diddy's arm.

"Oh, I was hoping to see you again, pretty," the orangutan boy said in a sweet tone as he arrived, and then spoke to Diddy. "Ah, hi, dwarf monkey, how long no see."

"B-b-but..." stammered Dixie, trembling with fear. "W-weren't y-you d-dea-"

Suddenly, someone else arrived on the scene: a red-footed langur boy appeared riding a jet ski, complex enough to be of their own.

"Hey! How are you, monkeys?!" exclaimed the langur boy towards Diddy and Dixie, from the jet ski. "Long time no see you two!"

Diddy and Dixie wanted to convince themselves that they would be dreaming that they had *Jemky and Melenky* in front of them. Because of nerves, they couldn't even think about what to do; they couldn't believe what they were seeing, much less on that island.

"Uhh, Dixie..." Jemky said, looking sideways at Diddy, the box in his hands. "Does your little friend Diddy already know?"

"W-what?!" exclaimed Dixie, trying to recover from the impression, "And w-weren't you *dead*?!" she added, pointing to Jemky's chest and looking for his scar.

"What?! *"Dead" me?!*" exclaimed Jemky, looking at her strangely. "What are you talking about?"

Jemky looked at his chest under his vest. To Diddy and Dixie's surprise... there was no trace of having been shot as Dixie had recounted, not even any scar.

"But...!" Diddy exclaimed in shock.

"You must be up to something now!" exclaimed Dixie, pointing at them.

"Huh?! What are you talking about" Jemky and Melenky exclaimed simultaneously, looking at Dixie strangely.

"You want to do something to us right now!" replied Dixie defensively. "You carry guns!"

"What?! What are you talking about?!" Melenky replied, looking at her with oddity along with Jemky. "What guns do you say?"

"Ahh, I get it, Dixie," Jemky said, changing his tone and starting to laugh. "Are you telling me about those little fake stories you told Diddy about how I threatened you and you shot me when Rocky's accident happened?"

"But that's what happened!" said Dixie, looking at them with absolute oddity. "And what are you talking about Rocky?! You were the one I shot! And how the heck did you two get here?!"

"Oh, calm down, baby, I understand what you mean," Jemky added calmly. "I know you still don't want Diddy to know about ours."

"By the way, for your information, Dixie and I are dating!" added Diddy firmly, before hugging Dixie.

"W-what?!" exclaimed Jemky, gaping for a few seconds. "Is that true, Dixie?!"

"Well, yes!" replied Dixie in the same way as Diddy. "Diddy is my *boyfriend*! Any problems?!"

Suddenly, Jemky started to show a disappointed face, while Diddy and Dixie kept watching him for any attack. Suddenly, Jemky began to be furious, dropped the box he was carrying to the ground and angrily headed towards Dixie.

"You are a liar!" he exclaimed before grabbing her hard by the hair.

"Hey, but what's wrong with you?!" replied Dixie trying to push him away and confused by Jemky's attitude.

"Hey, let her go!" Diddy exclaimed, coming out to defend her and pushing Jemky hard. "*What's wrong with you, you idiot?!"*

"So, are you the boyfriend of this liar, you whipper-snapper monkey?!" Jemky asked him, looking too furious.

"Yes, do you have any problems?!" replied Diddy, looking at him in confusion. "*And why do you say so to her?!"*

"Have you gone crazy?!" Dixie added in the same way.

"It can't be..." Jemky muttered before heading back to Dixie and grabbing her hair. "*You told me you had nothing with that stupid Diddy!"*

Dixie gave Jemky a single push immediately while she was confused by everything he was saying.

"What are you talking about?!" exclaimed Dixie. "*We haven't even seen you for a couple of months!"*

"And first of all: how did you know we were here?!" Diddy added, looking at them suspiciously.

"Well, Dixie told me to come!" Jemky said, to which Diddy and Dixie looked at him with extreme oddity.

"You're crazy!" Dixie replied, losing her patience. "*How am I going to tell you to come?!"*

"Don't act crazy, YOU told me to come for you and we'd have a secret date!" Jemky replied, pointing to her. "*You told me that in that LETTER YOU SENT ME!"*

Diddy and Dixie were too confused, and just looked at Jemky as if he were a lunatic.

"What letter are you talking about?!" Dixie asked in confusion. "You're speaking nonsense!"

"Well, this one, LOOK!" replied Jemky, taking a letter from his pocket and showing it to her. "*You told me you were here with Diddy but you didn't have anything with him, and that you and I would have a date! That's what I came for: to see you!"*

Jemky handed the letter to Dixie stamping it to her face, she took it and Diddy also joined in observing it with great oddity... To the surprise of both, the letter contained in a corner the same stamp that had Mr. Pinky's, which said "Hurricane Island Post Office" and, as if that were not enough... it was written in the *same Dixie handwriting*, which left both of them speechless. They stopped to read it quickly:

"Dear Jemky,

I hope you had a wonderful vacation. I'm sure you haven't heard about me for more than two months, but don't worry, I'm fine. I'm on an island called Hurricane Island, and you don't even know how I came here: Diddy had been kidnapped by circus tamers and I went to rescue him, we ended up freeing all the animals there. When we were returning in a boat, some waves swept us to this island, and due to a hurricane season, we haven't been able to return to DK Island, so we had

to stay here. No, I have nothing to do with Diddy if that's what you think, we're still friends, but I don't like him anymore, and he hasn't told me yet that he likes me. Sincerely, I don't know what I thought when I expected so much from him when you were the one who managed to win my heart in such a short time, Jemky. And you can't imagine who we find here: Mr. Pinky! In fact, we're living in their house. Mr. Pinky has treated us wonderfully, he's no longer as arrogant as when we met him, only the first day he scolded us for trying to return to DK Island. We have also met new friends, we were even building a ship to return to DK Island, but they turned out to be fake friends and we got away from them. Mr. Pinky isn't on the island now, but he sent us a letter. And you know what? As soon as we heard that there were already mail services here, I suggested to Diddy that we send letters to DK Island and I wanted to write to you too. I haven't told Diddy, in fact, he doesn't know that you and I had ours, you know... he doesn't like you at all, so I had to make up that I was with you because you had threatened me, even on DK Island I had to say that. A few days ago, I also told Diddy that ours had only been a joke and a deal that you had proposed me for him, I also told him about the accident that happened with Rocky, I have been telling Diddy that that kid was you and that I had shot you so that he would believe that we wouldn't see you again. I even told him I had nightmares about you. I really miss you so much, Jemky, I would give anything to see you again and be with you. I spend every day thinking about you. By the way, it occurred to me if you could come to this island and we would see each other for a while in secret. And don't worry... Diddy won't have to know. And of course, if you also want and can come, I would be very happy. If you come, go to an animal shelter nearby and ask for me the animals that were from the circus, I'll go out to see you. I hope you still love me, Jemky, because I do love you, I love you too much. If you can and receive this letter, answer me.

With love, Dixie"

The letter ended with the address of Hurricane Island and the island where the group of bully kids lived, the date of one day after they sent the *letters to DK Island* and, in addition, with the same *signature of Dixie*. Besides, it brought the same *map* with which Mr. Pinky's letter had come.

Both Diddy and Dixie... froze when they finished reading it; they didn't know what to think about it... The events that were mentioned there, were *the same* that had happened to them throughout that season and, as it would be supposed, it was *impossible* for the evil kids to know all that. Dixie, still shocked, tried to decipher where that letter could have come from and with that information. On the other hand, Diddy had gone blank and suddenly began to fill himself with various thoughts.

"Have you already seen it?!" Jemky exclaimed, still furious. "I came just for you but it turns out that you are now dating that dwarf Diddy!"

"The real question is: Where did you get this letter?!" replied Dixie, demanding an explanation.

"You sent it to me!" reaffirmed Jemky. "Some swordfishes handed it to me! *Look what you're like, Dixie! Have you forgotten ours?!*"

"What are you talking about?! I didn't even have anything with you! Tell me where you got it from!"

"Huh, how could it not?!" he protested. "To begin with, you agreed to date me after that useless Diddy didn't tell you he liked you!"

"First, DON 'T say that way to Diddy! And second, you did propose that stupid deal for that emerald!"

"But look what a liar you are!" he exclaimed, giving her a little push. *"Did you forget that you told me you were only going to love me, the last day we met?!"*

"Are you insane?!" Dixie exclaimed, feeling indignant at all the defamations Jemky was hurling at her. *"In the last days of school, YOU and your group threatened me, you all forced me to steal Diddy's pyramid!"*

Jemky, hearing that, began to laugh immediately, while Dixie was with almost exhausted patience and with all the desire to give him his good comeuppance. Diddy, for his part, was still confused.

"Hey, baby, stop lying to your 'boyfriend' like that if that's how you consider that fool Diddy!" Jemky told her, finishing laughing. "I remind you that you stole that pyramid *yourself* so that I could present it to Mr. Pinky."

"Look, stop talking nonsense before I leave you worse than when I shot you!" Dixie replied in a threatening tone, showing her fists.

"And is it a lie?!" Jemky replied before lowering his voice. "Besides, hadn't you done it so you could give me that emerald that your mommy told you to give to someone you love very much?"

Dixie was completely shocked by the last thing Jemky mentioned, as that detail was *totally* impossible for him to know. Likewise, Diddy was more shocked with what was said.

"B-but *how do you know that?!"* Dixie asked without recovering from the impact.

"And how else am I going to know?! You told me yourself!" replied Jemky, raising his voice again. *"You told me that you had given it to Diddy but then decided to give it to me because that fool never told you he liked you!"*

"URGH, stop saying fallacies, you DUMB STUPID ORANGUTAN!" Dixie shouted in anger before grabbing Jemky's tufts tightly. *"Now tell me where you found out about all that letter says!"*

"I'm telling you that YOU sent it to me!" Jemky insisted, pushing her away at once.

"Have you been following us or something?!" Dixie speculated, pointing to Jemky and Melenky.

"What?! We didn't even know about your lives!" Melenky said. "That letter was sent by you, Dixie."

"I didn't send anything, not even -"

"Huh, and it wasn't just one letter!" interrupted Jemky. "You sent me *two more* and I answered them to you this week, even in the last one you even wrote to me that you hid them in *Mr. Pinky's closet!*"

"I swear you're insane, Jemky," Dixie replied in a calmer tone, looking at him strangely.

"You're a FIRST-CLASS LIAR! "

Jemky went back to Dixie to pull her hair with both hands, to which she tried to let go as best she could.

"Hey, leave her, deranged orangutan!" Diddy exclaimed, coming to Dixie's defense.

"You don't even mess around, you stupid monkey, YOU STOLE DIXIE FROM ME!" he replied, starting to slap him.

Diddy began attacking Jemky back to push him away, and then Dixie gave him a single slap as well. Then, between them, they pushed him into the water, causing him to fall into it. Jemky, all soaked, got out of the water again, looking furiously at them both.

"ARGH, all right! Ours, DIXIE, is over!" Jemky shouted, pointing at her. *"I'll NEVER forgive you for this!"* he exclaimed angrily, before picking up the gift box to throw on the ground. *"And look what I had brought you!"*

Jemky opened the box quickly, where he showed a bouquet of flowers with bananas and sweets, and then took out more things from it.

"Look at this! I even brought you the gift I gave you on our last date!" he exclaimed, showing her a painting.

Suddenly, Dixie froze... That painting that Jemky was showing her had branches and colored leaves that formed trees, as well as having colorful stones that formed the silhouettes of her... and Jemky... It was the same model she had given Diddy on the last date.

"But..." Dixie said without any more words.

"And look what I had done for you too!" interrupted Jemky, pulling out one last thing. "I made an album with our photos that were taken on DK Island, *after the extra classes!*"

Jemky threw her a notebook that had Dixie's and his names on it. Dixie took it in a forced way and opened it... Both she and Diddy ended up gasping and paralyzing at what they were seeing.

"But what the heck?!" Dixie exclaimed instantly, shocked in her entirety and rapidly changing each of the pages; just by looking one by one... she didn't know what to think.

"Dixie...?" Diddy said frozen at all, looking up at her with a shocked expression when he saw those photos.

The photos inside the album *clearly* showed Dixie with Jemky together... as if they were a couple. Among them, there were photos of the two embracing, holding hands, kissing each other on the cheek, even the two appeared kissing and, as if that were not enough, Dixie looked quite happy and at ease with Jemky there.

"No, no, no! But this never happened!" said Dixie, casting a murderous glance at Jemky. *"Tell me where you got this! WHAT THE HECK WITH YOU!"* she added, throwing herself at him to attack him.

"Let... LET ME!" Jemky exclaimed, pushing her aside and snatching her the photo album, "You don't even want to accept some photos! *Well, this's over, Dixie! I'M GETTING OUT OF HERE!*"

Jemky took the entire gift box and headed all furious towards the jet ski, but not before Dixie took him by the tufts again.

"NO! You're going to tell me now WHAT'S ALL THIS!" Dixie ordered firmly. *"How did you know we were here?! Where did you get our information?! AND WHAT THE HECK WITH THOSE*

PHOTOS?!"

"ARGH, BUT WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO TELL YOU?!" Jemky interrupted, pushing her and shouting in protest. *"That's all true, don't act crazy! But this is over, Dixie! I HATE YOU! Never talk to me again! And for my part, YOU'LL STAY ON THIS ISLAND!"*

Jemky then headed back towards the jet ski as fast as he could, at the same time Dixie went after him.

"NO! Come back here and I WANT AN EXPLANATION!" Dixie exclaimed, trying to catch up, but he had already gotten on the jet ski with Melenky, and they started speeding up instantly. *"JEMKYYY! MELENKY!"*

"AND THAT STUPID MONKEY WON'T LOVE YOU LIKE I DO!" Jemky exclaimed in the distance, pointing to Diddy.

Jemky and Melenky continued their course at full speed and were moving farther and farther away from the island. Jemky showed himself with a face of disappointment for Dixie as he turned to look at her from a distance... Although when they were going much further, he seemed to change it for one of malice suddenly.

"Now, accelerate faster, Melenky!" Jemky said before turning to look at Diddy and Dixie at such a long distance.

"Will we go back and see how those two break up?" Melenky asked him as he drove.

"No, clown, we must go back to our positions, let's go, quickly!" Jemky replied before pulling out a device that appeared to be an intercom, and began to speak towards it in a sneaky manner. "Mandrew! Rocky! We already did it!"

"Okay!" it was heard through the device... with Mandrew's voice?

Then, Jemky and Melenky made a gesture of malice while laughing...

Meanwhile, Dixie, from the shores of the sea, continued to insult Jemky above all for all the mysterious defamations he made to her and the scandal he made in a few minutes; she didn't even know what had just happened.

"Stupid thugs, I hate you! *I hate you, Jemky!*" Dixie grumbled before turning to Diddy. "We have to go for them and find out how-"

But Dixie stopped when suddenly, she noticed the expression Diddy was wearing. He was all serious as he looked at Dixie with some confusion... It was a face that Dixie didn't often see on him.

"Dixie..." Diddy said to her in a tone of seriousness and utter confusion. "W-what was all that?"

"What?" Dixie exclaimed, looking at him strangely.

"Do you... you sent that-"

"How?" added Dixie before grasping what he meant and trying to calm him down. "No, no, Diddy! Nothing that fool said is true if that's what you're thinking! I didn't write that nor-"

"Wait a minute, wait a minute, Dixie!" interrupted Diddy as he seemed to look at her with some suspicion. "W-what happened there? You-"

"No, no, Diddy, that's not true!" replied Dixie. "Tell me you didn't think that!"

"Dixie, but it's that... the *photos* and-"

"Hey, no, they're not real if that's what you think! I don't understand it either!" reaffirmed Dixie. "And I also have no idea where they found out everything that has happened to us. And not to mention those photos, I swear that *never happened!*"

"W-wait, Dixie...!" repeated Diddy again, looking at her seriously. "You never told me that story like that."

"Hey... did you really believe that dumb burnt-fur?" Dixie asked, shocked to see how he was reacting to the inexplicable event.

"Dixie... Please *just tell me*," Diddy replied, still remaining serious. "W-what did you do? Did you send-"

"No, no, Diddy!" Dixie reaffirmed. "I don't know where all that came from!"

"Dixie! Please, seriously, just tell me," Diddy exclaimed again. "You... Tell me if you were really with Jemky or something"

"But I've never loved him!" How can I love that jerk?!" Dixie exclaimed insistently. "Seriously, I don't know where or how they knew we were here! I don't know where he got those photos, I don't know who sent that letter! And I don't even know how Jemky managed to survive!"

"Well, according to how you told me, Jemky *didn't have any scars* or anything. So, that really happened to Rocky?" Diddy contradicted. "W-what really happened there?! Is that why Mr. Pinky said it could have been Rocky?"

"No, it wasn't that way! I already told you everything, it's happened how I told you, maybe Jemky healed quickly! And I don't understand how they knew everything that has happened to us since we left DK Island!"

"Wait, wait, Dixie!" interrupted Diddy in seriousness. "It's not that I want to make it up, but that letter had *your handwriting* and even had the same as Mr. Pinky's about that map, and we came to this island because of that storm, so... how did they find out that we were *exactly* here? Also... what about the emerald fact? And what about that painting? And those photos-"

"*I don't know anything, Diddy!*" Dixie replied. "I swear I don't understand where he got all that! Those photos never happened! I don't know where he knew that was what that painting looked like! And no idea how he knew the meaning of that emerald!... Diddy... don't you realize that maybe they could have been spying on us or following us in some way?"

"But how could they know so many things about us?! Even things that *only we* knew," Diddy replied, apparently not knowing what to think. "Dixie, please just tell me the truth!"

"I'm telling you the truth! Are you really not believing me?! Do you believe that stupid?!"

"I really want to believe you, Dixie, seriously, I wouldn't expect that from you, but some things don't add up!" replied Diddy, raising his voice, before pausing and trying to stay calm. "Dixie... *please*, I just want you to tell me the truth if there was actually anything between you and Jemky. I'm not going to stop you, I just want you to be honest with me..." he added in a calmer way, begging her with his eyes. "Please, Dixi-"

"But that didn't happen! I didn't do anything!" Dixie replied, still defending her position. "I'm serious, Diddy!"

"Dixie..." Diddy said, staring at her, before breathing a sigh and expecting one last clear answer from her, "at least tell me if Jemky also forced you to take those pictures after those extra classes, or something like that."

"No! I have no idea where they came from!" replied Dixie, losing her patience. "Those photos *never happened*, Diddy! They have to be fake!"

Diddy only made a small shock gesture at Dixie's seemingly dubious response. He was silent for a few seconds as he continued to look at her with absolute seriousness, and then turned around to start walking.

"Diddy! Where are you going?" she asked him as she followed him.

"I just need to see *Mr. Pinky's closet*," Diddy replied firmly.

"Are you serious, Diddy?! Ugh, look at it and you'll see that it's not true either!"

Diddy continued walking in the direction of the house and, indeed... he was somewhat incredulous now with Dixie's whole version about Jemky; for all the things the orangutan boy had shown looked pretty strange and, with each of them, Diddy began to think something wasn't right. He was starting to get the same feeling as when he thought Dixie was dating Jemky, but this time much worse.

But on the other hand, Dixie was too confused and outraged at the same time: clearly, everything Jemky said and showed was *not true*, and she didn't know where they had obtained so much information about them, even small details that very few knew... And not to mention those photos that never happened. Dixie, while walking behind Diddy, was also trying to analyze who could have provided all the information to the evil kids, but many things didn't add up, and what was most difficult to decipher is *how* they got to that *specific island*.

Diddy arrived at the house, with all the uncertainty latent in him. He looked for the keys and went straight to Mr. Pinky's room. Dixie went after him and managed to catch up with him; she was all calm, as she was sure that none of the defamations she received from Jemky were true, so she calmly waited for Diddy to check it out.

"You'll see that what that burnt-hair said about the letters in the closet is a lie," Dixie said to Diddy with a shrug as he was checking Mr. Pinky's closet.

Diddy searched every corner of the closet. He couldn't find anything, but when he checked one last drawer... he got a not-so-pleasant surprise. That only spilled the last drop of the matter and left him frozen for a few seconds, he turned to Dixie with a shocked expression... and with a *couple of letters* in his hand, which began to tremble. Dixie, seeing that, was paralyzed and questioning if the universe would be against her at that moment or something similar.

"W-what?!" Dixie exclaimed, all in confusion.

Immediately, Diddy opened the envelopes of the letters, which also had the same postage stamp. Dixie joined in to read them, hoping that at least they were some of Mr. Pinky's papers... but no, they were letters that claimed to be sent from *Jemky to Dixie*... Seeing them, Diddy felt as if a strong knot formed in his stomach and chest. Those letters appeared to be Jemky's replies to the main letter that Dixie had supposedly sent; in these they said references about the indications of how to get to Hurricane Island, apart from some loving words and other details linked to the *current context* where even details were mentioned that it was impossible for those evil kids to know, all with the address of the Hurricane Island and the dates of the last days.

Diddy finished all shocked and came to his senses. He gave Dixie a look of indignation, reluctantly put away the letters, and then immediately left the house to get down from it. At the same time, Dixie was only completely shocked; now she didn't know why all that was happening, or how those letters got there.

Dixie also came down from the house immediately to try to catch up with Diddy and explain that she knew nothing about it.

"*Diddy, no!*" Dixie exclaimed desperately, waiting for him to react. "*I swear I didn't even know about those letters!* I don't know where they came from! I-I mean, I did send more letters these days, but they were for DK Island!"

"Enough was enough, Dixie! Tell me the truth!" Diddy replied, turning to look at her firmly. "Was that why you wanted to send more letters later?!... And wait a minute, that's why you also told me that Jemky's matter had been a deal and a joke for me?"

"*No, Diddy!*" Dixie reaffirmed, putting her hands on his shoulders. "Please, Diddy, believe me, I don't know what all this is, I swear by my life."

"Dixie, this is serious," Diddy replied, staring at her and now in a pleading tone. "I'll defend you from that orangutan, but I have no problem with you telling me the truth, it doesn't matter if it's not what I want to hear, but I *need the truth*, Dixie!"

"I'm speaking to you with the truth!" she also pleaded with him. "Besides, haven't you ever thought that we might be in danger if those stupid kids have been knowing about us?"

"But how could they have known all that about us?!" Diddy replied. "I mean, how do you explain the deal you told me about Jemky?! And about the letters we sent to DK Island and from Mr. Pin-"

"I don't know either, Diddy!" Dixie replied in the same way. "I have no idea how they knew that! Please don't think I did it, believe me!"

"Oh, Dixie, please, I really want to believe you, but this is all very weird! I just want you to tell me how things really went and that's all. I want to hear it from you! And what about the photos?! At least tell me how it was about the phot-"

"It's all as I've told you!" she replied, losing patience, before speaking in a low tone. "Diddy... seriously, I didn't know anything about this, not about the letters, not about anything, not about the photos, that never happened, we never took them even *as a joke!* They must be fake!"

"But why are you lying to me?!" Diddy replied, turning away from her and beginning to shed tears from his eyes. "I did love you, Dixie, and I thought you loved me the same way, too."

"Of course I love you, Diddy! Don't say that!" replied Dixie trying to calm him down and taking him by the shoulders again. "No, Diddy, please don't cry! If you want, let's find out where all this came from; *that* is what we should do now."

"No, Dixie! You said the same thing to me recently with the letters in the closet," he exclaimed, turning back and wiping his eyes. "I don't want to be like that with you! Not if you've had me as an option or whatever you've considered me."

"Diddy!" exclaimed Dixie, not knowing what else to say to him to make him believe in her word. "You have to believe me! *I really don't know!*"

"*No! This is over*, Dixie!" he said firmly before turning and leaving, still with tears in his eyes.

"*What?! Hey, no! Diddy!*" Dixie replied, taking his arm in despair. "No, no, no! Wait, Diddy! I don't want to end this because of *something so unfair!*"

"*I'm serious, Dixie Kong!*" Diddy replied, turning away. "I'm not going to continue with this, you don't want to explain to me how everything happened!"

"Are you really not going to love me anymore just for something I have no idea how it happened?" Dixie asked indignantly.

"I do love you, Dixie, and I could still love you," Diddy replied, speaking seriously. "But I also have limits. I don't like you to hide things from me."

"*No, Diddy!*" replied Dixie, still stopping him. "I don't want to end this way!"

"I said yes, Dixie, I'm sorry!" Diddy replied, letting go of her. "And I need to be alone for a while, please."

With that said, Diddy began to walk away, and Dixie tried to follow him at speed.

"*DIDDY! No, Diddy, please!*" Dixie exclaimed, before stopping as Diddy continued to run. "*Ugh, you know what?! I'll find out all this for MYSELF AND I'LL PROVE YOU OTHERWISE, DIDDY!*"

Diddy continued to run as far as he could and didn't even bother to turn to look at Dixie again.

Dixie, for her part, was deeply outraged at everything that had just happened. She had no idea how it all happened in a moment; all the defamations that Jemky threw at her were *false* and, to top it off, there were those letters in Mr. Pinky's closet as he had mentioned. She also felt so bad for Diddy, as it wasn't fair when she didn't even know where they got information on the whereabouts of the two of them.

Even so, Dixie kept convincing herself that something wasn't right at all and that it was likely that someone could have given them away *just* to the group of bullies from the school, and *that* or *those* someone would be on the same Hurricane Island. However, she also had the idea that those evil children have perhaps been following in their footsteps all along and neither she nor Diddy would have noticed... but that was actually very rare, since Hurricane Island was *too far* from DK Island for them to know, in addition that the way they got there was because of a storm.

Dixie stopped to try to draw quick conclusions about the situation: the whole journey from the circus to the things that happened to them on Hurricane Island, many animals there knew; but on the other hand, the accidental crime she committed against Jemky nobody knew, only Diddy; likewise, it was strange that they knew about the meaning of the emerald and about the Mr. Pinky's letter and those that they sent to DK Island, since only Diddy and Dixie knew about it; and, finally, that painting was so coincidental that it was identical to the one she gave to Diddy. And about the photos, Dixie had no idea where they came from, as she *never* took them. She didn't even know how it was possible that Jemky had survived and in such a short time as if nothing had happened to him, since she had shot him *straight* in the chest and he went for a long time without receiving any attention.

Dixie had so many theories on the matter that she no longer knew what to think. She hated Jemky more than ever, and felt that if she managed to find him again, she wouldn't mind beating him down until she couldn't. During all that time, the bully kids from the school were the ones they least wanted to run into; she thought that at least in Hurricane Island they would be safe from them... But it didn't turn out that way...

Chapter 58: Unexplained Unknowns

After so much thought, Dixie began to look for answers as to the sudden event that had happened, and she should do it as soon as possible, since the fact that the evil kids now knew where they were, represented a serious danger to her and Diddy. Besides, what Dixie wanted the last thing was for Diddy to end everything between the two of them for something she didn't do.

Another assumption Dixie had was that perhaps the letters she and Diddy sent to DK Island may have fallen into the hands of those evil kids, and from there they got their information... although that was also strange, since in those letters they didn't mention some things like: Mr. Pinky's letter, the ship or the reprimand that Mr. Pinky gave them on the first day. Among other assumptions that crossed her mind, was that the courier apes would have been the ones who provided the information to Jemky and company, but she didn't find logic to that. In fact, as she mentioned before, she had been sending more letters to DK Island to her family in those days; they had never been to Jemky.

Without further thought, Dixie decided to head towards the post office; she had to find out first whether that letter had been real or not. She ran as fast as she could towards that place.

Arriving at the post office, she immediately went to peek out from the window and talk to the apes there.

"Hello! Excuse me," Dixie said hurriedly and exhaustedly. "I need to ask you-"

"Ah, it's the little monkey girl again," said one of the apes when he saw her. "Yeah, what do you need?"

"I-I want to ask you if..." Dixie replied, trying to stay calm. "If n-no have come here an orangutan kid, a mandrill, a red-shanked langur and a capuchin monkey."

The three apes only looked at her strangely when she asked them that, which kept confusing Dixie.

"No, we haven't seen any group of kids of those species you mention," they replied. "The only little ones who have come these days have been you and the red-capped monkey."

"Ohh, so... no one, apart from the two of us, has sent any letters to an island called Z? Or near DK Island?!"

"Z Island?" the apes wondered strangely. "That's also far away and nobody sends letters there during this season. And no, not even to DK Island someone sent letters, apart from you and the monkey in red. Why?"

"Oh, long explanation," Dixie replied somewhat frustrated. "It's that two of those kids that I mentioned, came here recently and showed us a letter that according to them I wrote, but it's *not* true. And it had my handwriting, my signature, and even had the stamp from here and the map that you also deliver from here!"

"What?!" exclaimed the apes, showing shock. "But how is that possible? No one could have this stamp! Are you sure it was the same?"

"Yes, it was the same," replied Dixie. "It had the same color and read 'Hurricane Island Post Office'."

"Well, it must be a confusion," reaffirmed one of the apes. "As far as I know, no one has stolen our stamp seal, nor have more ape kids come, and no more letters have been sent to distant islands... Sorry, girl... But maybe all this is a confusion or something similar."

Dixie was frustrated that she couldn't find answers. She wished Diddy was there at that moment so that he would hear that and believe her even a little. With what those courier apes told her, everything pointed to the letter being false with all certainty. Without more to say, Dixie said goodbye to the apes and left.

Dixie still didn't want to give up and kept looking for clues. So, she went to a place where she used to go daily with Diddy, and where there would be *a certain group of* kids that came to mind, since, although the friendship with them had ended, those children had made her go through difficult times with Diddy during the last weeks that they were their friends.

When she reached that site, she hid behind the trees. She saw no trace of any of her past friends nearby; only the huge ship could be seen in the area. She got out of the trees, and then went to the small huts that belonged to the other kong children in the herd; she thought maybe they would have answers she needed.

Some of the kong children were outside their huts, when suddenly, they were surprised to see Dixie arrive. Everyone looked at her in amazement as if she was a celebrity they hadn't seen for days.

"It's Dix-"

"No, silence! Don't say anything, please!" Dixie interrupted, making them all quiet and looking everywhere to make sure none of her past friends saw her. Then, she headed towards them again. "Now yes! All of you here, I need you to tell me something."

"Are you no longer friends with the four of them?" they asked her among all. "By the way, about five days ago was the last time they said they hate you-"

"That doesn't matter anymore!" Dixie interrupted. "What I want to know is... if by chance, haven't four other kids been here: an orangutan, a mandrill, a red-shanked langur and a capuchin monkey?"

The others looked at her strangely and wondered among themselves what Dixie had asked them.

"How did you say?" one of the children asked again. "A red-shanked mandrill, a capuchin orangut-"

"Or else, tell me something else!" Dixie interrupted again. "Just in case, your four friends haven't been wanting to do *another* evil to Diddy and me?... Haven't they been talking about some... *fake letters* or something?"

"What?!" they exclaimed, each looking at Dixie as if she were saying meaningless things to them. "No, they hardly even name you anymore."

"Hey, we have to make other adjustments to the ship!" said someone else entering the scene. It was Ricky, who when he saw Dixie, was surprised. "Huh? Dixie?!"

Dixie stood still for a few seconds, as she didn't want to run into any of her past friends again at that time. Although they had greeted them in recent days when they ran into them, it was awkward to speak to them again.

"How are you here again?" Ricky asked, looking at her in confusion.

"Uh, hi, Ricky. Uhh..." Dixie didn't know what to say, but she had to think how to figure out what she needed without it sounding so direct. "Where are the others?" she asked, recovering the normal tone of voice.

"They went to look for materials for some adjustments of the ship, why?"

Dixie didn't know how to ask him about the matter without him thinking that she was falsely accusing them and without any scandal being made.

"It's that... I just wanted to ask you if... Ah, did you know that there are mail services on this island?" Dixie said with a forced smile and trying to deflect the topic.

"Mails? No idea, I didn't know that was here," Ricky replied with a shrug. "Why?"

Dixie knew she had to be a little more direct in order to get answers.

"Oh, just in case... didn't you want to do *another* of your evils to Diddy and me?" she asked hurriedly and staring at him this time.

Ricky looked at her as if she were a lunatic, and didn't seem to be a suspect in what happened.

"What are you talking about? We don't even mention you two around here anymore," he replied with a gesture of indifference.

"Well, but I'll just tell you something," Dixie said this time earnestly and holding the urge to want to explode. "*We no longer want any problems with you.*"

"Huh? But what's the point of this, Dixie?" Ricky asked, frowning and confused at what Dixie was saying. "What's wrong with you?!"

Dixie didn't know what else to say and decided instead to leave the place.

"Uh, forget it," she said before simply leaving.

"Ricky! Are these the ones we need?" said an additional voice arriving at the scene.

Dixie turned and saw Mandy, Jenny and Melvyn arrive with a few pieces of wood in their hands. When they saw her, they were surprised too.

"Dixie!" Mandy exclaimed along with the rest. "What brings you here?"

"Uhh... no, nothing," Dixie replied with a forced smile, before walking away. "I just wanted to greet you. Goodbye!"

Dixie started running away from there. She was frustrated that she didn't know how to ask them directly about the topic, because if she did, it was likely that a public scandal would be made, and Dixie didn't want to get involved in any more trouble with them.

She needed to go see Diddy, but she was sure he didn't want to see her. It also crossed Dixie's mind that maybe Jenny could have made that fake letter as some kind of revenge... but then, she remembered that she knew nothing about Jemky's crime or of Mr. Pinky's letter or of those sent to DK Island and, moreover, she didn't know on which island the bully kids from the school lived.

Dixie continued to try to decipher who may have been the real one or ones responsible for the whole matter, which was already making her lose patience.

Diddy was reclining with his eyes lowered and hugging his legs, on the branch of a tree in a place where no one could see him. After everything he had seen and heard, he was deeply disappointed. He was weeping and sobbing silently with vivid and continuous tears coming out of his eyes; he felt as if he had been given a sudden blow to his heart that he never expected. Apparently, he could not believe Dixie in any way, even if he wanted to convince himself that it wasn't true and would never have expected that from her. All the strong illusions he had created, all the expectations and all the love he thought he would build with Dixie, had collapsed from one moment to the next. After having spent wonderful moments with her, having believed that everything was fine and that they would do their best, now he only found himself with an unexpected broken heart. Diddy never expected something like this to hurt so much, as it was a thousand times worse than the previous time on DK Island.

He wasn't in the mood for anything; he just looked around as every moment he spent with Dixie came to his mind. All the time, he was sure that Dixie felt the same way he did about her, in the times she told him she loved him or when she hugged or kissed him... But now, he was just thinking that it had all been a lie or that she hadn't been being so honest with him. Every thought he had about her only made him cry and feel more pain. Diddy had never felt anything so wonderful; he had been quite excited about Dixie, he had given her part of his heart, he had been so happy to have had something so beautiful with her, but now, as if it had fallen suddenly, he no longer had it... Or rather, he didn't want to have it that way even if it hurt a lot, not if she had been hiding it from him all along... *Or at least that's what he believed.*

Diddy was still shedding and wiping away his tears continuously, when suddenly, he began to hear certain movements in the tree on which he was sitting. He looked up as he finished wiping his eyes and saw clearly that the leaves had just been moved, but no one could be seen nearby, so he didn't care. Until several seconds later... movement was heard again and instantly someone came down from the top of the tree and landed right near the branch where he was.

To his surprise... the one who had appeared was none other than Jenny, who, noticing Diddy, made a gesture of astonishment. Diddy was surprised at her the instant she landed, but then looked away again and didn't pay attention to her, as if she wasn't there and hadn't seen her; he didn't even have the mood to flee.

Jenny had some vines in her hands. Then, she stared at Diddy strangely for a few seconds, as if she didn't expect to find him in that mood.

"Uh... Hi, Diddy!" Jenny greeted him with a smile, walking along the branch where he was.

Diddy barely looked up at her and greeted her from afar, but he didn't say anything else and didn't even care.

"Uhh... is something going on?" Jenny asked him with a little insecurity.

"No" Diddy replied without looking up and coldly.

Jenny looked at him with apparent concern, put down the vines she was carrying on the branch and went to sit next to him, to which Diddy looked at her strangely immediately and even moved away a little.

"Hey, don't worry, I won't do anything to you," Jenny said, smiling a little. "What do you have?... Is something wrong?"

"No, it's nothing," he replied, looking more away so she wouldn't see him.

"Are you sure?" Jenny asked again, showing a little worried about him. "I mean... you look kind of sad. Is something wrong with you?"

"It's nothing," Diddy reaffirmed, turning his back a little. "Don't ask me."

"Oh... Can I help you with anything?... Sure, if you need it," she said in a tone of kindness, placing a hand on his shoulder.

"No... Seriously, it's okay, thank you," Diddy insisted, still staring down.

"Are you sure?"

"Yes... Really."

Jenny was still quietly beside him silently, looking at him with some pity as she had never been seen before. Diddy, on the other hand, wanted her to leave and leave him privacy to continue venting, because likewise, it was somewhat uncomfortable to see any of his past friends again. Although the truth, that no longer mattered much to him at that time, not if the Dixie topic was what tormented his thoughts now.

"Well, but if you need anything, I could help you," Jenny added kindly, which seemed a bit strange to Diddy. "Uhh... isn't it anything about Dixie, just in case?"

At that question, Diddy couldn't help but fill his eyes with tears again, which Jenny could immediately notice and showed some compassion for him.

"No... Well, yes... I mean..." Diddy replied, hiding his face more and trying to hold back tears. "That shouldn't matter to you!"

"Oh... I'm sorry," Jenny apologized with a forced smile. "I said it because she's not here with you and it seemed strange to me, since you always hang around together... Can I ask what happened?"

"I don't want to talk about it," he replied, still not looking at her and trying to wipe his eyes. "By the way, what do you come to with that attitude?" he asked suspiciously.

"Hey, I just found you and wanted to know what was happening to you, that's all," Jenny replied, still in a kind tone, before pausing. "Uh, do you mind if I stay?... I know the terms we are with you, but... honestly, I haven't stopped caring for you, Diddy."

Diddy looked at her weirdly immediately; he was beginning to sense where the matter was going, so he put himself on alert to her.

"Okay, it doesn't matter if you don't want to tell me," Jenny said, placing a hand on his shoulder. "Whatever it's, don't be sad, you'll be sure to fix it."

"No... I don't think so," Diddy replied again in disappointment and looking down. "Not after what she hid from me."

"Huh? Why? Is it something so bad?"

"Ugh! I mean, no, no... Forget it!" said Diddy after realizing he was answering the question involuntarily. "By the way, Jenny, it's not to be bad, but... *I need to be alone now, please, okay?*"

"Oh, okay... it's okay," Jenny replied, still smiling. Suddenly, she began to approach him as if she wanted to give him a hug. "But don't feel bad anymore, Diddy. Maybe Dixie didn't feel the same--"

"Hey, wait a minute!" Diddy exclaimed, turning away instantly and grasping her intentions.

"What? Hey, I just wanted to give you a hug to make you feel better," Jenny said in a sweet tone and got closer to him again. "Don't you want me to hug you?"

"*Well, no, thank you,*" Diddy replied, looking at her suspiciously. "And I said I wanted to be alone now."

"But I do want to hug you, Diddy," she said with a smile and being very close to him. "Don't be shy, I want to be with--"

Diddy, now sure of those intentions, became alert again and quickly got up, but suddenly, Jenny began to stop him by holding him by the arms.

"*No, no, no, Jenny!* Don't think that cause of that I'm going to allow you--"

Suddenly, Jenny grabbed him by the shoulders and cornered him against the tree as she used to before. Diddy tried to push her away, but she grabbed him back by the arms.

"Jenny, no, seriously!"

"Well, but if you're feeling bad, how about... you give me a chance now, Diddy?" Jenny said with a wink. "Come on, monke--"

"No, let go of me!" Diddy exclaimed.

Diddy managed to break free and tried to get down from the tree, but Jenny caught him immediately and cornered him again in a rough way.

"*No, Jenny!*" Diddy exclaimed, moving away and pushing her hard... to the point of making her fall from the height of the tree.

Instantly, Jenny screamed and, as she fell to the ground, she lay on her side and didn't move.

Diddy went blank instantly realizing the defensive move he had just made. He was relieved at first... until he realized later that Jenny didn't get up... She didn't even move or make any noise; she

was completely still as if she had been knocked out by the fall, even though Diddy had only pushed her away and got rid of her.

"*Jenny?*" he whispered to himself as he looked at her from a distance.

Diddy stood still and thoughtfully for a few seconds, before he began to be alarmed by what he did. He got down from the tree immediately and ran in the direction of Jenny in a hurry.

"Oh... No, no, no! *Jenny!*" Diddy exclaimed desperately, going to help her. Then, he started moving her to see if she would react. "Jenny, Jenny! D-did I push you really hard?! Forgive me, I didn't want to! It's that you also were-"

Diddy turned her over to place her on her back, when suddenly, he realized that Jenny had her eyes wide open and not blinking at all... Instantly, Diddy was paralyzed and in a strong state of shock, before he began to tremble and feel his circulation drop to his feet as he thought of the worst.

"No..." Diddy said, breathing rather agitated and desperate. "Oh, no... Oh, no! *Jenny! JENNY!*"

Diddy, who was recently in a deep state of broken heart, was now in severe panic and didn't know what to do now or who to turn to for help. He went back to Jenny and, in desperation, got near her to hear if she was breathing, and also took her hand pressing on her wrist to see if she had a pulse... *But he didn't feel anything...* Jenny didn't seem to have any *signs...*

"No... No, no, no, no, no, please, Jenny!" he exclaimed, shaking her to make her react. "*Jenny, please, get up, say something! Jenny!*"

Diddy was completely alarmed and desperately thinking about what action to take in the face of what he had just done, for the situation had become quite serious from one moment to the next.

"Jenny, speak, please, get up!" continued Diddy pleading as he shook her. "*Jenny, pleas-*"

But later... he suddenly noticed *something* he could see in Jenny's eyes that caught his attention... *Although he didn't know what it was...*

Chapter 59: Unfair Disillusionment

It was sunset hours, and Dixie was sitting on some rocks on the beach. She thought about all the individuals she knew from Hurricane Island and all the things that were mentioned in that letter that she never wrote. She tried to figure out who might have been the author of all that, but she couldn't get any final answer yet, she couldn't even find any logic to it.

Dixie needed to go find Diddy; she wondered how he would be at that moment. Maybe for him it was all over, but not for her, not until she could prove that all those defamations that had been made to her were false. Dixie feared that she would never find an answer and Diddy would never believe her; she didn't want to throw away a relationship that both of them had been building and had wanted so much to have.

She even went around the beach several times to see if Jemky, Melenky or the four bully kids appeared again... Although that didn't seem to happen nor was there a trace of them, which became strange, since in addition... she thought that if they wanted to hurt them both, they would have already done it and wouldn't let themselves show out of nowhere just how Jemky had arrived with Melenky. It came to cross her mind that the situation of running into those bullies didn't even look as threatening as she thought.

Then, she headed towards the animal shelter, as the animals that were from the circus were the first to inform them that Jemky and Melenky had arrived to look for them. Now she understood why those animals were nervous to tell them that, so she assumed they would have some clues.

Upon arriving at the shelter, she looked directly for those three animals that had informed her about it. It wasn't so difficult, since she barely arrived, those animals noticed her presence as if she were the center of attention.

"Dixie! How is it going?" everyone from the circus greeted her, some cheerful, and others, on the other hand, looked at her with uncertainty as if they knew something about the topic.

"Hey, I need you to tell me something," Dixie said seriously. "Those of you who had told Diddy and me that those two kids were looking for us: I want to talk to you. What did those two kids say to you?!"

"By the way, Dixie... Really..." said the same zebra that had informed them, "was that orangutan boy your... *another boyfriend?*"

"What?! No!" Dixie replied firmly and disgustedly. "Of course not!"

"That's what he told us," added a gorilla. "He said that he had come looking for you, that he had a surprise for you."

"Oh, no, of course not!" reaffirmed Dixie. "Those two kids who came were from the group of thugs from the school Diddy and I were going to. And that orangutan is *not* my boyfriend; he's an insane psychopathic kid; he's crazy!... Why didn't you tell us earlier that those looking for us were an orangutan and a red-shanked langur?"

"We thought that was true!" replied an elephant. "And you know, we were afraid of how Diddy would react; we didn't want you two to fight."

"Oh, but you would have told us anyway," Dixie replied before looking down in frustration. "Oh, so what! You didn't know those fools, anyways. And yes, Diddy got upset with me now... He even wanted us to break up."

"What?!" exclaimed the animals, showing shock. "But why? Aren't you two supposed to trust each other? You could explain it to him and tell him that it was all a misunderstanding, wasn't it?"

"I know. But it's that it's not a simple misunderstanding; you don't know what that idiot orangutan did," Dixie said, feeling indignant again. "He showed us a letter that according to him I sent it, it even had my own handwriting, but I have no idea who sent it or if they made it themselves. By the way... didn't he tell you about that letter or do you know anything about it?"

"Well, yes... He showed us that letter so quickly and we saw that it was from you," the animals replied with concern. "But what exactly was it saying? So, it wasn't you who sent it to him?"

"No, I swear I don't!" Dixie replied firmly, trying to calm down. "Y-you see, I'm going to tell you all this so you understand it well..."

Dixie explained to them the whole situation about the letter, about the defamations, about the painting, about the photos, even all the background before leaving DK Island, she even had to tell them about the accidental crime she committed against Jemky so that they would better understand the context, something that no one but to Diddy had told, except for her sister and cousins before leaving DK Island. All these details left increasingly shocked the animals, who began to be as concerned as Dixie.

"... what intrigues me most are those photos; I don't know how he took them if that *never* happened," Dixie finished telling uncertainty.

The animals were shocked with everything Dixie had told them. They stayed for a long time wondering among themselves if that had an explanation, although none seemed to have one.

"How weird," commented one of the animals. "First of all, no one could know where you two are if you came here because of a storm."

"Well, I think those bad kids have been following you two in some way," said another. "Although the real question is... How did they do it?"

"It's the same thing I want to know in the first place," Dixie replied in confusion. "I mean... in part I could understand Diddy: it's practically impossible that those fools have known about our whereabouts! And that letter even said things that *only the two of us* knew!"

"And at the post office you haven't asked, Dixie?"

"Yes, I also have been there," Dixie replied in frustration. "I was even told that *no one* but the two of us had sent letters to distant islands."

"And how about you tell Diddy to go to the post office so he'll *ask himself*, and he'll believe you?" a gorilla suggested.

"I want that, but he doesn't want to talk to me right now," Dixie replied.

"But I don't think you're going to be on those terms forever; at some point you'll have to talk to each other again," added another of the animals. "Or we can go to. We'll help you convince him!"

"Hey, I really appreciate it, but... you know this is just the two of us' business," Dixie told them, smiling a little.

"I know, but it's the only thing that can be done at the moment," commented another of the animals. "Try it yourself first; if you convince him, I know he'll believe you. After all, it's not good for you two to be on those terms because of what you tell us about those bad kids who defamed you."

"And if after that he doesn't want to talk to you, come back here; we'll try to explain to him," another animal told him seriously.

Dixie wasn't quite sure she could convince Diddy one more time, but at the same time, she knew it was her only alternative if she wanted to fix the situation once and for all, at least so she wouldn't be on bad terms with Diddy.

She said goodbye to the animals and left the shelter immediately. Then, she went to find Diddy; she had to find him as soon as possible, because she would have to convince him somehow: either the letters were made by the evil kids themselves or someone else could have sent them to play tricks on them.

Dixie headed to the house and hoped that Diddy had already arrived. What she didn't know was how she could talk to him after what happened; she would have to do it in the best possible way so that he would want to listen to her and be calm.

But upon arriving at the house, Dixie realized that Diddy wasn't present. She thought that maybe he was still out, with no signs of wanting to return for the time being and needing some time to himself. So, Dixie went out to the porch of the house and stopped to think about where Diddy might be right then and there.

Suddenly, being on top of the house, Dixie managed to see a silhouette in the distance... It was Diddy! He was running as if he were looking for or chasing something and, seconds later, disappeared into the trees. Dixie immediately got down from the house, and then headed as fast as she could to where she had just spotted Diddy to look for him.

She arrived at the area where she thought she had seen Diddy, and began to look for him in every corner, but she still could not find him... When suddenly, she heard some murmurs in the distance.

She seemed to have heard a couple of *known voices*... One of them was clearly heard to be Diddy's, while the other... was from someone who caught Dixie's attention considerably... and *not in such a good way*. Diddy seemed to be chasing the other entity that was being heard.

Dixie followed the sound of the voices, which only began to fill her with thoughts of uncertainty and she didn't want to be thinking about anything bad that might make her feel worse.

"But just tell me, please," Diddy was heard saying.

"I already told you! If you kiss me now, I'll tell you," replied the other voice that sounded clearly to a *known female voice*.

Dixie heard that everything was coming from behind some big bushes, so she headed there. When she looked out and finally arrived at the site, she got an unexpected surprise. Dixie made a gesture of enormous astonishment, while Diddy made the same gesture, and then the third *someone* present also did the same... The one who was accompanying Diddy was none other than Jenny.

Dixie stayed still for a few seconds and now she was sure of her thoughts she was having a couple of minutes ago, in turn that she began to tremble and fill with more overwhelming thoughts. She didn't want to be thinking about the worst.

"W-what?" stammered Dixie looking suspiciously at the scene and trying to stay calm.

Diddy was right in front of Jenny and holding her by the arms himself. He was also seen with an expression of not knowing what to say and only stared at Dixie before he could answer her. Meanwhile, Jenny continued to stay serious.

"Hi, Dixie!" Jenny said with a forced smile.

"Uh, D-Dixie..." Diddy stammered, looking at her and Jenny at the same time. "It's that J-Jenny-"

"Ah, Dixie, sorry if you don't know yet, but..." Jenny interrupted still with that same expression, "Diddy and I are going on a date," she added, hugging him and in a sweet tone. "Right, Diddy?"

"What?!" Diddy exclaimed. "No, no, wait, wait!"

"Yes, Diddy," Jenny replied. "Hadn't you told me that you broke up with Dixie and now agreed to date me? Or were you lying?"

"Yes, we broke up, but I didn't say that."

"Hey, are you denying me?!" Jenny exclaimed, pushing Diddy. "You told me you'll date me!"

"Wait a minute, Diddy!" Dixie interrupted, staring at him and trying to calm down. "D-Did you really break up with me?"

"Yes, he said he doesn't love you anymore, Dixie!" replied Jenny before him. "And then he proposed to me to go on a date."

"Nooo!" Diddy replied instantly. "I mean, I did break up with Dixie, but I-"

"Hey! But what, Diddy?!" interrupted Jenny, annoyed and giving him another push. "Is it Dixie or me?! *Tell me!*"

"No, no, what happens is that Jenny is -"

"Me what?!" Jenny interrupted again. "You said we were dating! You said you don't want to know anything about Dixie anymore!"

"The Dixie fact is true!" Diddy interrupted with absolute firmness. "But the other fact doesn't-"

"Diddy!" Dixie interrupted, shocked after hearing that. "Do you-"

"He's dating me!" interrupted Jenny, holding Diddy. "Tell her the truth, Diddy, don't confuse her anymore!"

"*That's not the case!*" Diddy replied. "I'm only here with Jenny because I just saw that she-"

"Because we're going on a date together!" interrupted Jenny insistently. "*Tell her the truth, Diddy!*"

Dixie was with a strong feeling in her chest and not knowing what actions to take, while several doubts when she found Diddy next to Jenny invaded her mind.

"S-sorry to interrupt!" exclaimed Dixie, looking sideways at Jenny. Then, she went to Diddy and took his arm to speak quietly and seriously. "Diddy, look, I just came to talk to you, I wanted to tell you-"

"No, leave him, Dixie!" interrupted Jenny, immediately pushing her away abruptly. "The two of us are going on a date!"

"I just need to talk to him!" replied Dixie, taking Diddy's arm again, though Jenny didn't seem to want to allow it. Then, she whispered to him quickly. "Diddy, I just have to tell you something, *we have to fix this, please.*"

"Wait a minute, and *what* do you want to talk to me about?" whispered Diddy, looking at her strangely. "I'm not going to fix anything that happened if that's what you think, Dixie, because there's *nothing* to fix there."

Instantly, Dixie made a gesture of indignation at Diddy's response.

"Hey, I'm serious!" Dixie replied. "I don't want ours to end like this!"

"But it's already over!" replied Diddy, looking at her with the same seriousness. "And this no longer has fix, and right now-"

"But this is important, Diddy!" Dixie replied, holding him by the arm. "Just let me talk with you-"

"He doesn't want to talk to you, Dixie!" Jenny interrupted, pulling her away from Diddy. "He's now going out with me!"

"I just have to clarify an important thing for him!" replied Dixie, beginning to get angry. "I-"

"Hey, wait a minute, wait a minute!" interrupted Diddy, calming the situation. "First of all... you and I really *don't have anything anymore*, Dixie," he added, speaking quietly, "and there's no way to fix this anymore, I'm sorry."

Dixie was much more outraged at what Diddy was telling her.

"No, wait a minute, Diddy! How's that?!" Dixie exclaimed, heading towards him. "You told me that ours is over, but not for me *yet!*"

"How could it not?!" replied Diddy seriously. "*You didn't want to explain to me what really happened there.*"

"I've already told you a thousand times that I *don't know or did anything, and you don't want to believe me!*" replied Dixie. "That's what I came to repeat to you!"

"But how could I believe you with all that I saw?!"

"How can you think all that was true?!" Dixie added indignantly. "Are you really going to do this, Diddy?!"

"Oh, look, Dixie... *I do want to believe you, but with that I have no way, really,*" Diddy replied, returning to a normal tone of voice, before taking Jenny's arm. "Now, if you'll excuse... I was solving something about Jenny that-"

"Yeah, Dixie, I'm sorry, but we're going out," Jenny interrupted, smiling at her with some derision. "And I know you two don't have anything anymore-"

"Wait a minute!" Dixie interrupted, before speaking to Diddy. "Ours wasn't over yet, Diddy, much less for something you can't believe me!"

"But there's no fix, Dixie!" replied Diddy, before holding Jenny's hand. "And now, I was seeing that Jenny-"

"And are you two really dating?" Dixie asked them with a doubtful look.

"*No, no!*" Diddy replied. "It's that Jenny isn't-"

"Yes, we're dating, Diddy!" interrupted Jenny, pushing him. "*Tell her the truth!*"

"That's right, Diddy!" Dixie exclaimed, also staring at him and earnestly. "Or tell me if you really wanted to date Jenny now!"

"*NO!*" replied Diddy. "I don't have anything with Jenny, she just-"

"*How could it not?!*" Jenny replied, pushing him again. "*Stop denying it, Diddy, and tell her it's true!*"

"*But it's that it's not true, just-*"

"*NO, Diddy!*" interrupted Dixie firmly towards Diddy. "*Better tell me what all this is! You really don't love me anymore and that's why you don't want to believe me either?!*"

"But there's no way to fix this, Dixie!" replied Diddy in the same way. "And I'm not going-"

"That's right, Dixie!" Jenny reaffirmed, hugging Diddy. "Diddy doesn't love you anymore because you were hiding all that from him!"

"That!" Diddy pointed firmly. "That's why I have nothing to fix with you, Dixie!"

"Hey, I didn't do it!" Dixie replied, losing her patience. "And why did you tell her-"

"Get it, Dixie!" Jenny interrupted. "You weren't real with Diddy! You had him as a second choice!" she added as Dixie adopted a shocked expression. "You were hiding from him that that orangutan boy was your boyfriend!"

"W-what?!" Dixie exclaimed, being shocked at the last thing Jenny mentioned. "Hey, but what have you been saying to Jenny, Diddy?!"

"Wait a minute!" Diddy exclaimed. "That-"

"Yeah, you told me that recently, Diddy!" Jenny interrupted. "That Dixie was a fake one to you for lying to you about that other boy and that *they even had photos!*"

"Hey, Diddy!" Dixie replied, looking angry. "*Ugh, how could you, Diddy Kong?!*"

"Wait!" Diddy exclaimed. "I didn't-"

"Admit it, Diddy!" Jenny interrupted again. "You said you're going to date me and that you don't love Dixie anymore because of what she did to you!"

"*Urgh, you know what? Better break it up, Diddy!*" Dixie pointed at him, before turning around angrily to leave.

"Hey, wait!" Diddy exclaimed, though before long, he made only a gesture of indifference. "Ugh, okay, whatever you say, Dixie!"

Dixie looked at Diddy again in the distance with enormous indignation at the answer, then quickened her pace and left completely... as she felt her heart end up shattering after failing to fix the situation with Diddy... And maybe she couldn't do it anymore.

Night had fallen. Dixie was at home, sitting in her hammock in the room and staring down. She was too sad and angry, wondering why all that had happened to her that day. Just half the day ago, everything was normal, and now she only had a deep wound in her heart. She wondered how it was possible that Diddy had not believed her at all about the fact that those defamations weren't real, no matter how much she reaffirmed it to him. The worst thing is that she no longer knew how to prove to Diddy that everything was false, and she even lost the mood to continue looking for answers. And now... had she somehow found Diddy along with Jenny? Dixie would never have expected that from Diddy, she was even thinking that maybe he was just doing it to make her feel bad about something she didn't do.

Dixie cried and sobbed all the time while she didn't know whether to get angry more with Jemky, Diddy or Jenny... However, Jenny was the one for whom cared the least, and for Diddy she only was quite disappointed. For whom she was exploding with fury was for Jemky; she swore to herself that if she found him again, she would make him pay for defaming her no matter what... Even her fear of finding him again had already vanished; now she only exploded with anger for him and was frustrated to know that she couldn't find him again to give him his due, and she didn't even understand how he had appeared.

Dixie didn't know what to think. At the moment, she didn't want to see Diddy after what happened, and maybe he would return to the house soon, so she decided to go out instead. She got down from the house, and then went for a walk outside.

She stopped at a place that was close to the animal shelter, since she wanted to enter it, but she also didn't want to have to give explanations if someone saw her in that mood, so she just went to sit in a corner between some bushes and rocks, on the outside of the shelter for safety.

She wanted to be calm, but suddenly, several thoughts invaded her. All she thought about was Diddy; she couldn't believe that now it was all over. After having had wonderful moments by his side, now she was only heartbroken for him, and all because of something unfair that she no longer

knew how to repair. Although she said she didn't want to talk to Diddy anymore, deep down she wanted to have him in front of her and continue to affirm that nothing Jemky said and showed was true, that she would never do something like that to him. But on the other hand, she was furious when she remembered that the only thing Diddy did afterwards was go with someone who weeks before tried to separate them a few times... She kept feeling indignant after remembering that Diddy could have told Jenny what happened, and now there would be no way for them to fix it; even if she wanted to think it wasn't true, those thoughts of seeing Diddy along with Jenny reappeared in her mind... And this time she had seen them with her own eyes when she found them together.

With every thought she had, Dixie began to sob more and a lot of tears began to flow from her eyes. She didn't have any mood for anything at all, she just needed to cry as much as she could at that moment. Lastly, she also didn't know in what terms she would be with Diddy from then on, but she didn't even feel like thinking about it.

Chapter 60: Sudden Events

The next day had arrived. Dixie had slept lying on one of the rocks in the same corner near the shelter, where she spent the night before. She had decided not to sleep in the house this time, as she needed some alone time to be able to let off steam. She got up to get some bananas to eat, and then returned to the same place. She didn't feel like anything; she just thought about everything that had happened the day before.

Suddenly, she heard several footsteps nearby. It was a group of animals that were from the circus, walking around the shelter. Dixie stared at them for a moment: most of them already had almost all their wounds from circus training healed, besides, they were increasingly seen with a better countenance and a more cheerful attitude; that reminded her of when they were rescued from that zoo... Suddenly, she thought that maybe if it hadn't been for her and Diddy, who knows what fate those animals would have been. That thought at least managed to get a little smile out of Dixie... Although later, she became sad again when she returned to the present.

"Huh! Dixie! How is it going?" exclaimed one of the animals when they found her.

Dixie stood still for a moment when she was found out. Immediately, she tried to change her expression, because she didn't want to show herself in a low mood. The group of animals headed to her and were surprised to find her there.

"Hi... How are you?" Dixie replied with a faint smile.

"What are you doing around here so early?" the animals asked her, looking at her strangely. Dixie tried to hide her sadness, but from the way she expressed herself, it was evident, and some of the animals noticed. "Is everything okay?"

"Uhh... Yes, of course," Dixie replied, trying to smile. "Everything is fine..."

"Sure?" they asked her, not so convinced because of the low expression she showed. "And... have you talked to Diddy?"

Dixie couldn't help but look sad at the question again, which was very noticeable to the rest.

"Oh, I'm sorry if we were-"

"No, it's okay, don't worry," Dixie replied, trying to smile again, but she couldn't keep pretending she was okay. "It's just that... he and I don't have anything anymore."

"*What?!*" exclaimed the animals, shocked and beginning to murmur.

"How?! That is... not anymore, definitely?"

"But you two were meant for each other!"

"That's what I thought," Dixie said with a low look. "But I think I was wrong."

"Didn't you manage to convince him to believe in your word?"

"Diddy never believed me that all that is fake," Dixie replied in frustration. "And I don't know how to prove it to him anymore."

"So, we'll go talk to him!" exclaimed the animals with attitude and the rest joined. "We'll bring him back to you, Dixie. Together we'll convince him."

"No!" Dixie interrupted as she recalled with anguish what happened next. "Forget it... it'll no longer do any good."

"But why? We want to help you two come back."

"Yeah, you two can't be like that and--"

"It's that... Oh, just leave it at that," Dixie replied, trying to restrain herself as she also recalled how she found Diddy along with Jenny when she tried to talk to him. "I really thank you for your help, but... I don't want to talk about this anymore, I'm sorry. And no, I really can't do anything anymore."

The animals watched her sadly. Everyone was sympathetic and really wanted to help her and Diddy, but Dixie insisted on doing nothing more about it.

"Oh, okay, Dixie," the animals replied before entering a moment of silence. "Uhh, don't you want to spend some time at the shelter? Today they made banana cake," they kindly suggested.

"Yeah, come, so you can feel better," said another of the animals in the same way. "You're welcome there, don't forget it."

Dixie, although in absent spirits, smiled a little at them and agreed to accompany them, since after all, she had nothing else to do for the time being.

In the afternoon, Mr. Pinky's house was empty and completely silent. Neither Diddy nor Dixie were present... Although a few minutes later, and after there was no presence at all... Diddy arrived at the house.

Anyone would think that Diddy was calm and arriving normally, but it didn't seem to be so... For some reason, he was somewhat restless and tired at the moment he reached the door of the room.

"*Dixie! Dixie!*" he exclaimed, banging on the door in a desperate way, as if he even wanted to push it. "Dixie, please open me! *Dixie!*"

For some reason, Diddy seemed desperate to get in... but he received no response from Dixie. Seconds later, he went to the side window, which looked into the room.

"Dixie, Dixie, are you here?!" Diddy exclaimed, trying to force open the window. "You have to listen to me, please... Dixie... It's about Jenny and the others! They have--"

But when he managed to open the window a little, he peeked inside... only to realize that Dixie wasn't present.

"Ugh, why doesn't she show up yet?" muttered Diddy to himself. "*Dixie!... DIXIE!*" he shouted again as he searched for her.

He continued to look for her nearby, but she gave no sign of being present, so Diddy made a gesture of frustration.

Then, not finding Dixie, Diddy got out of the house and ran to another place, this time to the animal shelter... Apparently, he had one important thing to report, as he had just mentioned.

He arrived at the shelter, and the first to notice his presence were the ones from the circus... Those who barely saw him, all looked at him seriously.

"Hey! I need to talk to you!" Diddy said to the animals, hurriedly heading towards them. "D-do you remember you told us about some kongs disappearing-"

"Well, well, little monkey, what have you done?!" exclaimed the animals, throwing a hardened look.

"Huh? Me what?" Diddy asked them in confusion.

"What did you do to Dixie?" asked one of the animals looking at him seriously. "In the morning, she was here, spent the whole night sleeping out there and was so sad for you."

"Is it true that you have already changed her for another girl?" asked another of the animals. "For your friend *Jenny*?"

"What?! No!" Diddy replied earnestly. "I mean... I was with Jenny yesterday, but it's not what you think. What happens is that Jenny, and in fact, that whole group of friends we had, are-"

"Hey, sorry to interrupt you," said one of the animals. "But we also have an important detail to tell you about... that *letter* you think Dixie sent to that orangutan boy."

"Huh?!... Hey, and what does this come to? How do you know?" Diddy asked strangely at the comment. "Did Dixie tell you anything about that?"

"She told us it's fake!" said another animal directly. "She says she never sent letters to that orangutan boy and you don't want to believe her!"

"She even went to the post office and *there they told her that no one* has sent a letter like that," added another of the animals.

The rest of the animal group continued to bombard Diddy with claims that Dixie did nothing wrong to him, which made him tense and began to confuse him.

"Hey, wait, wait!" interrupted Diddy, calming them down and trying to contain himself. "Look, I don't want to talk about that topic, but it's that you weren't there at that time: that letter had the Dixie's handwriting and was from the post office, it said things that only *we* knew, and the orangutan not only showed us that letter, but also more things and-"

"Yeah, also photos and a painting and things that that orangutan boy said that nobody else knew!" one of the animals interrupted. "Yes! Dixie told us, and also told us that *all* of that is *fake*; she says she has no idea where those mysterious evidences came from."

"Hey, but look..." replied Diddy, still not convinced, "even Dixie and I sent some letters to our island a week ago, and the letter that that orangutan showed also said that, and nobody knew that! They even had the *stamp* of that post office and the map, and I don't know what's up with the photos!"

"But anyway! She says she *didn't* write it down or take those pictures!" the animals reaffirmed. "You've got to talk to her, Diddy. Try to believe her one more time, please. Dixie doesn't seem to be able to do something like that to you."

"I really didn't want to believe she could do that," Diddy reaffirmed. "But I didn't know what to think with everything we saw and were told. Besides... how could that orangutan boy know about us? It's... impossible that he has known so many things like that out of nowhere!"

"Well, nobody knows, Dixie doesn't know either!" one of the animals replied. "Even to us it all sounds so strange too, but perhaps you should get together to find it all out. I don't think Dixie is lying."

"But so... how do you explain the photos?" added Diddy. "I mean... they are photos! How can that be refuted? And she didn't even want to give me an explanation about it, she just told me that they never happened, and even that they were fake. I wanted her to at least tell me how they happened, but no--"

"Well, she also said she doesn't know where they came from!" replied the animals. "She said she *never* took them!"

"Come on, Diddy. Go find her and talk to her. You two were meant for each other, are you going to let everything between you end?... And in case you're wondering, Dixie *didn't* come to tell us all this out of nowhere; she had first come to ask us if we didn't know *where* those supposed evidences could have come from, that's why we started to find out about the situation."

Diddy's mind was only filled with confusion now with everything he was being told and he didn't know what to do anymore.

"You see... Yes, I'll talk to her; at some point I know we'll talk again," Diddy replied, trying to be calm. "I even recently wanted to talk to her, but she wasn't at the house and she wasn't last night either". Diddy just breathed a sigh before continuing. "In fact, I was going to tell you something that I discovered and that I also need to tell you. It's urgent, in fact! Very urgent!"

"And what did you want to tell us now that you've arrived?" the animals asked him.

"Ugh, it's that... it's hard to explain and maybe you won't believe it because it must sound absurd," Diddy replied before sighing again. "But I do need your help or whoever, please! The thing is, I found out that..."

Dixie had gone back to walk around the island. She had spent much of the morning and afternoon at the animal shelter, and also went for a walk nearby between times. After all, she needed to clear her mind a little... even though the only thing on her mind was Diddy. Even in the morning she had also passed by the house to rest only for a while, take a bath and be distracted. For some reason, Diddy wasn't present when she was at the residence. Dixie supposed that maybe he would need his

space too... Or she also supposed *who he* might be hanging around with at the time. But even so, Dixie didn't want to be overwhelmed with her negative thoughts anymore.

She continued her search for answers for a while, but she could not find any no matter how hard she tried, and even found no trace of any of the bully kids... It was even beginning to seem strange to her. She also wanted to continue venting, since she still felt hurt by everything that happened. She didn't want to see Diddy at all; seeing him again at that time would be only more hurtful to her.

After so much walking in the middle of the jungle, she went to sit on a large rock so she could clear her mind a little. But as much as she tried not to think about Diddy and everything that had happened, it was what tormented her thoughts the most. She couldn't help it and began to become distressed again and shed tears from her eyes afterwards.

"Dixie?" a known female voice suddenly called her.

Dixie immediately looked up and watched where it had come from, while wiping her tears quickly. When suddenly, she realized that it was Mandy who was heading towards her. Dixie felt somewhat uncomfortable to see her again and much more so if herself was in that mood.

"Uh... Hi, Mandy," Dixie greeted her with a forced smile.

"Is something wrong with you?" Mandy asked, heading to her side.

"No... it's nothing," Dixie replied, smiling weakly and wiping her tears in a sneaky way.

"Are you sure?... You look a little sad," Mandy asked again in an apparent tone of compassion, which was very strange to Dixie, since she no longer trusted much in those attitudes of her past friends.

"It's okay, really," Dixie added, struggling to be calm.

Mandy looked at her with some doubts, but as if she guessed the situation because of Dixie's mood.

"Is it because of... Diddy, right?" she asked her with a little insecurity.

Instantly, Dixie filled her eyes with tears again, and looked away immediately.

"Ugh... Yes, yes, I guess you already know that," Dixie replied, rolling her eyes and trying to restrain herself.

"Oh... Well, yes... Jenny told me," Mandy said with a forced smile, before sitting down next to her. "And from what she told me, it seems that Diddy now did give a chance to her... But first Diddy had broken up with you, right?"

"Yes, it was so... and I don't want to talk about it, please," Dixie replied angrily, turning her back.

"I see... Uhh, and you... also had another boyfriend, right?" Mandy asked, turning Dixie's attention. "That orangutan boy who liked you at school was your boyfriend and you hid it from Diddy?"

Dixie immediately turned to look at her with deep indignation at such a fallacy, and even more so if it had already reached the ears of more ones.

"Hey, that's not true! Of course not!" Dixie exclaimed angrily. "I didn't do anything wrong in case you've been told like that... Urgh, Diddy told it, right?!"

"Well... he told Jenny, and Jenny told me. She told me that Diddy told her that you had sent a letter to that orangutan boy to come and see you and Diddy wouldn't know anythin-"

"*Nooo!*" Dixie interrupted, furious and feeling as if her blood was boiling at that moment, while inevitably beginning to shed tears. "*That wasn't the case! I don't know how the heck that psychopathic orangutan appeared here!*"

"Well, that's what Jenny told me... In fact, she also told me that Diddy told her a lot of things about you."

"What?!" Dixie exclaimed, increasing her anger. "What else did he say?!"

"Well, he told her that you were a fake one, that now he hates you, that you were a total waste of time for him and he regrets everything he did for you... Jenny even told me that Diddy always thought she was cute, but that he never gave her a chance because of you."

Dixie, being tired of hearing what she said, began to grumble in a low voice as she felt enormous anger inside her and began to sob angrily as well.

"Ugh... *Diddy Kong*," Dixie muttered, letting tears run down her face. "*Why were we dating?*"

"But don't worry... That's how boys are... Don't feel bad, Dixie," Mandy added before giving her a hug, to which Dixie looked at her strangely in the middle of her wet eyes. "Remember that there are many more boys in the world. Maybe Diddy wasn't for you."

"Hmm, there's the chimpanzee!" suddenly said a deep voice that belonged to neither of the two kong girls.

Dixie opened her eyes in full and looked everywhere to see who had said that... Suddenly, to her surprise, *a pair of figures* appeared heading towards them, who... didn't look friendly at all. Both were *tall ones* with hoods and dark cloaks on, so they didn't see faces or many physical features. They were approaching the two kong girls.

Dixie began to tense up instantly, as she clearly sensed that something wasn't right with those strange ones, and got up to start escaping, taking Mandy by the arm to protect her and also flee with her... But to her great surprise, Mandy grabbed her hair hard, preventing her from running.

"*What the-?!*" Dixie exclaimed to Mandy.

"*Come here, girl!*" both cloaked ones exclaimed when, suddenly, they grabbed Dixie by the limbs and even her hair.

Dixie began to scream and be filled with extreme fear, putting herself on alert as she struggled to get free from them; she had no idea who they were or why they were trying to catch her.

"*NO!... LET ME GO! WHO ARE YOU -*"

Suddenly, between both strangers they took out some vines and began to try to wrap her completely, including her hair. They tied her up and held her tightly with those same vines and, to Dixie's surprise... was *Mandy* helping those mysterious ones hold her?

Dixie panicked not knowing what was happening now. She tried to let go with all her survival instinct, but she could not succeed, because those cloaked ones had held her too tightly that she could not do anything. Then, these mysterious ones carried her in their arms and began to walk... while Mandy was walking behind them.

Dixie was trying to scream, but the vines also had her face wrapped around it, so she was just bursting out of terror and emitting sounds of deep despair. By their way of walking, those cloaked ones appeared to be adult apes.

"Calm down, little one... You'll just go back to where you should have *stayed*," one of those hooded figures said as he carried her in his arms.

Suddenly, with a frightened look and while she was being carried in arms by those hooded ones, Dixie managed to look under the hood of one of them: a face *quite known* to her... Dixie was instantly frozen and filled with terror... an immense terror that hadn't been had for too long.

Diddy was on his way to the house after telling the circus animals something he claimed to have discovered... Something that had made him have several thoughts and didn't know what conclusions to draw now. He had to go talk to Dixie, he knew that both weren't on good terms, but anyway, it was something of great importance that he had to tell.

Diddy was already close to the house. He hoped Dixie was inside it and wanted to hear him. But then... he stopped when he saw something strange hanging around Mr. Pinky's house.

He walked a little closer to the house, when suddenly, he noticed a *pair of silhouettes* walking and monitoring around Mr. Pinky's house and his room. Those ones were hooded, in addition to wearing long dark cloaks. By their way of moving and part of their limbs that could be seen, they appeared to be apes. Suddenly, those cloaked ones took out some heavy objects and began to push the door of Mr. Pinky's house, then entered it.

Diddy got into a state of alert when he had a bad feeling about them, since they didn't seem to be friendly beings and, stealthily, began to climb the stairs. He went to the porch of Mr. Pinky's house, near where those hooded ones were, strictly trying not to be found out by them. He couldn't see their faces well and just listened to them.

"No, there's no one here!" exclaimed one of them before getting out.

Both mysterious ones went down to Diddy and Dixie's room and, in the same way, also knocked down the door of it. Diddy immediately went downstairs to spy on them out the window, he was at least a little relieved that Dixie wasn't present at that time. Still, fear was taking hold of him.

"No, that monkey in red clothes and cap isn't here either!"

Diddy opened his eyes to the fullest and felt a strong inner shake when he heard them clearly referring to himself. Now he would have to flee, but at the same time, he was curious to know who these mysterious ones were and what they intended to do.

"*Urgh, these guys!*" exclaimed one of the cloaked complaining and stomping. "We have to punish them again! Who sent them to be with their dumb *couple-stealers* games?!"

"And where is the little blonde monkey in pink with flying-hair?!" exclaimed the other.

"That one has already been caught, they have her along with the other children."

Diddy felt a deep whirlwind in his stomach upon hearing that, as it was clear that it was Dixie... And he heard that she had already *been caught*.

Suddenly, a high-pitched sound began to be emitted, and one of the hooded ones pulled out from his hood a device from which the sound came.

"*The ship is going to sail! Come quickly!*" a deep voice was heard coming from the device.

"Oh, blast! Let's go, forget that monkey boy, at least they caught the monkey girl!" said the cloaked ones before leaving the room. "Let's go! To the ship!"

The two mysterious figures started heading towards the stairs, so Diddy had to go down as fast as he could and went to hide immediately among the nearby vegetation. Those mysterious ones got down from the house and started running.

With everything those cloaked ones had mentioned, Diddy deduced *which ship* they might be talking about, so he also began to run as fast as his four limbs gave him. He didn't know how from one moment to the next such a situation had arisen. He continued to run, while taking care not to be seen by those hooded ones. He was getting tired, but he couldn't stop until he figured out what that all was.

After several minutes of hustle and bustle, Diddy arrived at the right place and, to his surprise... it was empty! There was no ship on the site, it was just as it was when they were going to start building it. Now he was sure that it would be the same ship mentioned by those mysterious ones.

Diddy rummaged everywhere, until suddenly, he looked in the direction of the sea and noticed something shocking: floating already in the sea, was *the very ship* they had built with their group of past friends and the rest of the kong children, ready to set sail. Diddy immediately headed to spy on it closely. He might think that all of them would already start their planned journey on the ship, but... what he saw afterward, left him shocked in his entirety... A pair of other figures, *dressed in the same way* as those who invaded the house, were also on board, and not only that, they also had *all* those kong children from head to toe with vines, blindfolded and formed in rows... Yes, it was the kong kids of the herd with whom they built that ship.

Diddy panicked as he watched each of the children and, to his surprise... Dixie was among them too! The other children were completely still, while Dixie was the only one who presented desperate movements as if trying to untie herself. Immediately, Diddy began to head towards the ship, when suddenly, he heard footsteps coming behind him, so he had to hide... They were the same two mysterious figures who had recently invaded the house.

Diddy waited for them to pass by first and get on the ship. While waiting, he noticed another detail that left him shocked to the extreme: he managed to see *the very* silhouettes of *Ricky, Jenny, Melvyn* and *Mandy* also on board the ship... The curious thing is that they were *not* tied; on the contrary, they walked freely on the deck of the ship and even seemed to interact with the hooded ones normally... as if they were their accomplices or something like that.

The ship began to sail and, with nothing else to do, Diddy ran as far as he could towards it. It was too late to seek help, so somehow, he would have to infiltrate anyway. He threw himself into the

sea and swam as fast as possible until he could reach the ship, climbed up one of the sides of it and held on to certain pieces that protruded.

The ship was slowly moving away from the island, while Diddy continued to hold on to it, while wondering where they were going and what they would do with all the child crew. Above all, he wondered how he was going to get Dixie out of there. What he really was sure of... was that this was *not* a good situation...

Chapter 61: Strange Events

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The sunset hours passed when, on the open sea, a medium-sized wooden ship was sailing, which had been sailing for maybe an hour since it sailed from Hurricane Island. This ship had been built, more than a couple of weeks ago, by a herd of kong children... A herd which was now being moved and apparently *kidnapped* aboard on it, among them: a little chimpanzee girl with blond hair and pink clothes, who was trembling and shivering. Four hooded ones with long dark cloaks were on board, constantly watching all the children, who were bound from head to toe and blindfolded. Among the crew, there was also a particular quartet made up of two boys and two kong girls, who were sitting on one of the steps of the ship... all with an apparent fixed gaze and without any expression.

But in addition to all the crew mentioned, there was a little monkey of red garments who had infiltrated and that was fastened by a protruding bar on the outer sides of the ship. During the whole journey he remained in that position, since the bar to which he was grabbed was very short and he had no other object within reach to be able to climb to the deck of the ship.

"We are less than a kilometer away, prepare the sacks for these brats," one of the hooded ones told the others of his kind.

The four hooded ones took some large sacks, into which they began to introduce all the kong children. All these children seemed to show no resistance when those mysterious figures took them and put them in the sacks, except for the blond chimpanzee girl in pink, who with all her strength tried to untie herself in vain.

"Stay still, girl!" one of the hooded ones exclaimed as they put her in one of the sacks, at the same time that she tried to scream and staggered trying to get free.

Diddy, from the angle he was grabbed to the sides of the ship, could not see what was happening on the deck of the ship and had no way to climb; he was literally hanging while he had the sea running below him. His arms were already quite tired of being held down, but he could not let go, since when falling into the sea, he ran the risk of being run over by the ship or losing it from his reach.

During the journey, Diddy was also with all the uncertainty in his mind. He kept wondering *what all that sudden event was about*: maybe those mysterious ones appeared out of nowhere and kidnapped all the kong children along with the ship... or *perhaps*, his past friends were accomplices and would have been used to kidnap them all and that's why they built that ship; the second assumption being the most likely, since Diddy had very recently discovered *something curious* about those four kong children... *something shocking* that, if he had known before... he and Dixie wouldn't have rescued them the day they met them from the alleged kidnapper gorilla they mentioned to them, and instead would have investigated what the four of them really were.

A quarter of an hour passed when a rock islet appeared in sight, to which the ship was heading. The islet looked like it was covered with rock, which gave the impression that the ship would be about to crash... It was not until, in front of the ship, there was a sea cave to which it was going.

The ship began to enter the cave, which was getting darker and narrower, which was beginning to make it difficult for Diddy to see. There came a moment when the sides of the ship were almost touching the rock walls of the cave, to the point of causing slight scratches to Diddy, so he had to let go immediately and now cling to the walls until the ship finished passing. The ship continued to move through the cave while Diddy had now stayed behind, holding on as much as he could to several rocks protruding from the walls. Anyway, Diddy couldn't be left behind, so he set out to follow the ship. He, although with great difficulty, was holding on to any protruding rock to reach the ship, the problem now was that everything was dark and that prevented him from advancing fast, and the ship was already going quite far. Diddy tried to move as fast as he could, but as he hurried so much, he reached a point where he put his foot on a wet rock, which caused him to slip instantly and fall into the cave water. The water was so rushing that on several occasions Diddy was bumping into small rocks and it was difficult for him to swim.

After a few minutes of passing through the dark sea cave, outside light could be finally seen, so Diddy immediately swam there, hoping that the ship hadn't been lost sight of in its entirety. When finally got out of the cave, he could observe that the islet wasn't rock in its entirety, but also had an internal river that surrounded a ground with vegetation and, in the middle of this ground, there was a *high building* of maybe about six levels. That building was gray to black colors, with several normal windows on the first floors and high windows on the upper floors. This building didn't appear to be built by common animals... Or maybe not because of animals at all, as it was a building with an urban style. The whole area was surrounded by the huge rock as a wall, as if it were a *secret place*.

Diddy, finally reaching dry land, was speechless to see all that scenario, because that place didn't seem to be good due to the location and the perception it transmitted. Suddenly, he managed to locate the ship carrying all the kong children; this one was parked in a corner of the river... But the children and mysterious figures were no longer on board. Diddy immediately ran to the ship to make sure if there really was no one, he got on it trying not to make so much noise so that they wouldn't find him... And, when he boarded, he realized that, indeed, there was no one on board. Diddy continued looking for them quickly, when suddenly, he could see from afar the hooded ones entering the building: they were all dragging the large sacks with the children inside. Immediately, Diddy got off the ship and ran towards the building as fast as he could. Unfortunately, he wasn't even halfway there when those hooded ones closed the door the instant they entered. Diddy stopped and just breathed heavily while thinking about what to do now, because the building didn't show any other alternative entrance, even the windows contained several bars where not a bird would pass and, likewise, the walls were smooth almost entirely, so he couldn't climb.

Even so, Diddy was not going to give up and knew that he had to find a way to enter that mysterious building, so he began to walk around it to look for some shortcut. He spent a few minutes searching, but still found nothing. What was most visible on the facades of the building were barred windows and long smooth walls.

Suddenly, in a low corner of the building, Diddy managed to find a small square tunnel and, without further thought, went to it. The tunnel appeared to be a duct leading into the building, it was so small but enough for Diddy to enter it. He stared inside the duct, which was very dark inside and generated some fear because he didn't know what would be inside and where it would lead. Anyway, it was the only thing that could be considered as a shortcut to enter, so Diddy, swallowing all the fear he felt, began to enter through it and just continued to cross it and let himself be carried away along the way. There were times when Diddy got hit and realized that the pipeline was not entirely linear, but also had vertical direction, so he had to climb up with his limbs. It took him a couple of minutes to traverse the pipeline, both horizontally and vertically.

After an exhausting tour inside the small shortcut, Diddy managed to see lighting in front of him, and with that he assumed that the course would be over. When he reached the end of the pipeline, he peeked stealthily and realized that he was now *inside* the building. He felt a little excitement that he had succeeded, but now he had to look for *where* the hooded ones would be with all the kong children. Who he thought of most... it was in Dixie; he knew on the terms he was with her, but he also knew that he couldn't leave her alone in a situation like that, despite no longer having the same consideration for her after what he believed she had done to him.

Inside the building, he could see high gray walls and long corridors that gave the feeling that something bad would appear at any moment. Suddenly, Diddy was beginning to perceive a heavy atmosphere in that place; it was like an energy that only conveyed a feeling of never being able to get out of there. He looked everywhere and, with all the caution of not being seen by anyone, began to walk aimlessly through the corridors of the building. The walls had colors of bluish or gray tones all dark, which gave all the feeling of not being a good place to visit. The floors of the building also had gray tones and a few had black and white mosaics.

Diddy continued to walk through the corridors, taking stealthy steps and begging not to run into those hooded ones, as he was sure that if they found him, they would catch him too immediately. He was trembling with fear and just wanted to think that soon he would get Dixie and the rest of the children out of there to escape... Although with a whole herd of kong children, it would be very complicated to plan a safe escape.

Minutes later, Diddy could hear murmurs of deep voices that seemed to come from behind one of the walls... Apparently, they were the *mysterious ones*, so Diddy hurriedly followed where their voices came from. When he reached that wall, he noticed a door that led directly to the interior of that room, but... this was locked; he had to find some other way to get in easily. Suddenly, he looked up and noticed a tall barred window that had a direct look inward. Diddy, with great stealth, jumped and climbed until he reached the window: it had only a small space to put his feet, so he had to hold tight to the bars. From there, he already had a view into the room...

"I don't think it's necessary to keep these brats tied; they quietly stay still if ordered," one of the mysterious figures said.

"But the pink-clothed chimpanzee does; she didn't get the main hypnotizing mixture," another one added. "We can't give her the second dose to keep her still."

What Diddy could observe left him shocked: inside that room, there were several mechanical chairs where the hooded ones were placing each of the kong children, this time without blindfolds. And, as they had mentioned, these children didn't seem to have the initiative to run away and flee; they obeyed everything those hooded ones said to them while looking at them as if they had no expression of their own on their faces. Diddy was too confused, as he was sure that in such a situation, those children would run away or at least put up some resistance... But no, *they didn't even show fear of those mysterious ones*.

Suddenly, among all those kong children, Diddy managed to spot *Dixie*, who unlike the rest, did have all the face of fearing for her life while she was also in one of the mechanical chairs, tied up and unable to escape.

The hooded figures headed toward each of the children and began to manipulate the mechanical chairs, which contained lamps that they used to do what appeared to be check-ups, like if they were doctors examining patients.

Inside that room, some shelves also could be seen, in addition mechanical devices and instruments that gave a laboratory look to that room.

Suddenly, another mysterious figure entered the room through a door that was inside it. This one was also hooded like the others and, as soon as he arrived, he began to watch each of the kong children.

"How is everything going?" the new one who arrived asked. "Did they manage to catch all those brats?"

"Only that red-clothed monkey was missing," another of the mysterious ones replied with an angry tone. "All because those boys let him and the pink-clothed chimpanzee leave... Although we did manage to catch the chimpanzee."

At another point, one of the hooded figures went towards Dixie, who as he was walking towards her, began to tremble and even tears to flow from her eyes and breathe with agitation of fear... In fact, it was as if she knew something about those hooded ones... and *knew them*.

"What will we do with the chimpanzee?" the hooded one asked, stopping in front of Dixie.

Then, the new one who entered the room, also walked towards her, at the same time that the rest of the hooded ones were also observing her.

"I don't know yet," the new one replied before pausing as Dixie continued to tremble at the sight of them. "I don't know if we include her with these children as well... or we take her for testing... or we exterminate her... or else... we'll also go to look for her little siblings on DK Island. Hmm! Who knew they've been living on that island all along... Where on DK Island exactly do they live, little chimp?" he asked Dixie.

"N-no... *I won't tell you anything!*" Dixie replied firmly as she continued to tremble and have a horrified expression toward them.

"Well... If you want, don't tell us now... But we'll force you to do it later," the hooded one warned before turning around and heading toward other children.

Hearing that, Diddy had frozen: did those hooded ones mention *DK Island*... and mentioned Dixie's *little siblings*?... Suddenly, everything seemed to point to *something* that was known to him before.

"Well, we have to start *now!*" the one who entered the room last said. "Let's finish examining these brats... Hey, Will!" he said to another of the hooded ones, apparently calling him by his name. "Can you go see the star electric scalpel please?"

"I'll bring it in," the other one replied as he vented his hood. "By the way, we can already take this off from us."

Suddenly, the mysterious figures began one by one to remove their hoods and black cloaks and then leave them hanging in a corner of the room... Diddy was now completely shocked to the point of almost stopping his breathing and feeling an intense shake inside him, when he clearly saw the full appearance of the ones who had been hooded... Two of them were *orangutans*, while the others were three *mandrills* that he had already seen a long time ago, and whom he fought... the day he met Dixie, Tiny, Kiddy and Chunky. The *very group of mandrills and orangutans* that had held Dixie and family prisoner a while ago, were those apes. The last ape that had entered was a tall

orangutan, who was apparently the leader among the five ones. Then, the other orangutan was the one who left the room for a while.

All these apes wore short cloaks and thick necklaces with a stone, each of a different dark color, as if they were a band. Orangutans wore green and black cloaks respectively, while mandrills' cloaks were blue, red and brown.

Diddy, trying to recover from the impact, knew that he had to get Dixie out of there no matter what, because remembering all her history with those apes, he knew what danger she was exposed to... Much more so if she had now been a fugitive from them and they had caught her again. He could not enter through the door, as it was secured; nor through the window, since the bars didn't allow him to pass. Diddy panicked as he thought about what he would do to rescue Dixie.

Suddenly, the door that was inside the room began to open again as *other figures* were peeking out... Diddy opened his eyes to the fullest and felt a huge sensation of shock again that almost made him fall from the window when he saw the silhouettes of *those who* entered the room... He didn't know what to think of all that now. A group of *four kong children* consisting of an orangutan, a mandrill, a red-shanked langur and a capuchin monkey entered the scene, and began to observe also the children who were in the mechanical chairs... while smiling as if nothing. Diddy had gone blank for a few seconds and then started thinking thousands of things and generating more assumptions in his mind about the matter.

Then, the group of those four kong children noticed Dixie and immediately headed towards her.

"Ahh, but look who's here!" Mandrew said in a mocking tone when he saw Dixie.

"Long time no see, monkey girl," Rocky added in the same way.

Dixie, in the same way, was all shocked and with her eyes open with intensity to see the four of them in that place. She also didn't imagine finding them there and began to make quick guesses in her mind.

"B-b-but... H-how?" Dixie stuttered without recovering from the impact and looking at each of them fearfully at first.

"Oh, are you afraid, Dixie?" Melenky said, smiling mockingly.

"How are you, baby?" Jemky said by taking her hair and playing with it. "I wanted to see you again, beautiful."

"W-what are you doing here?!" Dixie asked, looking earnestly at the four of them. "Do you... Do you know those apes?!"

"Which ones? Do you mean them?" Mandrew pointed to the group of adult mandrills and orangutans, who were on the other side examining the other kong children.

"They're our dads, in case you didn't know," Rocky replied with a gesture of affirmation.

Dixie gasped and shocked again as she began to wonder if all that wasn't another one of her random nightmares. She tried to process what Rocky had said about the group of mandrills and orangutans.

Diddy, from the high window, had also been extremely shocked by this revelation to the point of feeling that, of so many impressions that he was taking that day, he wouldn't endure any other shocking novelty that came his way.

"W-wh-what... H-Ho-how...?" Dixie kept stuttering without wanting to believe it. "A-are y-you... their... *children*?"

"And yes, don't you see Jemky and me who look like our respective dads?" Mandrew replied proudly, his hands at his sides. "My dad is the blue-cloak mandrill and Jemky's is the green-cloak orangutan," he added, pointing to the adult apes. "Only Melenky and Rocky don't look the same as their dads because they're adopted," he added jokingly.

"Hey, that's not true!" Melenky and Rocky exclaimed, pushing Mandrew.

"Oh, why are you trembling, sweet?" Jemky told Dixie afterwards. "Nothing will happen to you if you behave-"

"You!" Dixie interrupted, looking at Jemky with extreme fury. "*Be thankful* I'm stuck here because otherwise I'd *beat you* until *you'll beg me for mercy*, orangutan with annatto hairs!"

"Wow, wow, calm down, baby!" Jemky replied in a mocking tone. "Do you say it because of... everything I said in front of that dumb dwarf Diddy?... Hmm, what a pity I have for him," he added, shrugging and laughing.

"Urgh, why did you survive when I shot you?!" Dixie grumbled, rolling her eyes and waving her feet in the air.

"Well, yes, I survived," Jemky replied in the same mocking tone. "But don't worry, baby, we won't take revenge or anything, because thanks to you who gave us that emerald, our dads brought us here and revealed their work that we wanted to know so much about."

"Yeah, they told us that they capture animals and experiment on them. It's awesome!" Mandrew added, admiring as if nothing, to which Dixie looked at them with a bad face.

"And by the way, *how* did you know that Diddy and I were on *Hurricane Island*?" Dixie asked them before exploding. "How did you know all our information?! And you, Jemky, where did that letter, those photos, everything come from-"

"Hey! Calm down, cute," Jemky interrupted, smiling. "Look, I can only tell you that... the *letter* was made by me. Wait, here I have something to show you," he added before rummaging through the pockets of his vest, and then pulling out a piece of paper and unfolding it. Do you remember this?" he showed her the paper, which had written instructions for making a miniature pyramid. "Yes, the same instructions you wrote me that time to make that pyramid that in the end I could not even do... But anyway, this paper helped me to *copy* your handwriting and write that letter... *fake, by the way*," Jemky finished and then put the paper back in his pockets before smiling mockingly. "What a pity that your now *ex-boyfriend* has believed it."

Jemky started laughing out loud, and the other three kids joined him afterwards. Meanwhile, Dixie looked at him with all the rage she could feel and, if not for the mechanical chair that had her trapped, she would have already given a hard beating to him.

Diddy, for his part, had been open-mouthed and paralyzed by that new revelation... He could no longer deal with so much novelty that left him shocked at that moment. Now he felt an enormous sense of guilt and remorse begin to invade him.

"You have nothing to do, do you?" Dixie said to Jemky, looking at him indignantly.

"Well, no," Jemky replied with a cheeky shrug, making Dixie angrier. "And by the way... afterward that monkey cheated on you with that girl called... *Jenny*, right?"

"*And how do you know that?! Where the heck do you get our information?!*" Dixie grumbled more and more shocked, trying to shake her limbs. "And the photos! Where the heck did you get them, Jemky?!"

"We can't tell you anything else, pretty," Jemky replied calmly.

"Wait a minute... wait a minute!" Dixie exclaimed, recalling an *important detail* that would fit the whole situation. "*Mandy*... She stopped me the moment I was kidnapped," she said, looking pensive, before raising her voice. "Urgh, I must have guessed! You all are *complicit* with those other four hypocrite fake ones we built that ship with, right?!"

The four stared at her for a while with some strangeness, at the same time looking at each other. Then, they started laughing out loud again, while Dixie was consumed by enormous fury and felt like she wanted to kick them all if she could.

"You mean... *Melvyn, Mandy, Ricky and Jenny*, right?" Mandrew asked mockingly, before pausing. "Well, '*complicit*' is not the word we would use exactly."

"Where are those four?! *I want to see them!*" Dixie exclaimed furiously. "I need to talk to those-"

"Hey! Calm down. They're not here right now," Mandrew interrupted. "By the way, I'm very sorry that you and that stupid monkey Diddy believed that those four were your *friends*."

"And now that monkey doesn't even love you anymore because he thought you cheated on him!" Melenky added, and then they started laughing.

Dixie was bursting inside with the fury, that she was even sure she would give each of the four a good punch.

"Don't worry, cute girl... I can be your boyfriend now," Jemky said, winking closely. "I promise to treat you like a queen-"

"*What are you doing so much here?!*" an additional voice exclaimed suddenly.

Everyone turned to look and it was just the group of adult apes, who were staring sternly at the four kids, in turn they stood still and looked at each other as if they didn't know what to do.

"Uhh... We had only come to see how the children are," Jemky replied with a trembling voice and a forced smile.

"*All four of you get out of here!*" the lead orangutan ordered firmly and pointed to the door.

"B-but-" Melenky stammered.

"But nothing!" the apes interrupted severely. "At this very moment YOU'LL START CLEANING ALL THE ROOMS HERE!"

"Oh, again?! But why?" Mandrew complained.

"Why do you ask why?!" one of the adult mandrills exclaimed. "We're going to punish you all again because for your fault WE COULD NOT FIND THE MONKEY IN RED!"

"What?! Just for that?!" Rocky replied. "But there are other ape children! And there's the monkey girl!"

"But we also wanted that MONKEY BOY!" another of the mandrills replied. "We need that monkey so we could exterminate him for letting us lose the chimp girl and her three little siblings a year ago! And now this was the chance to catch him, but you guys because of your childish games you LOST HIM!"

"B-but it's that-"

"BUT NOTHING!" the adult orangutan interrupted. "Besides, you had to be the ones who had to bring all these brat kids on the ship! But no! We had to go, specifically for those two little apes, since you guys came out with your ANTICS!"

"But it was Jemky!" Melenky replied.

"Hey!" Jemky replied, giving him a push.

"Jemky nothing! The punishment will be for the four of you!" the apes snapped. "We send you on a serious mission, NOT TO GO AROUND STEALING BOYFRIENDS, GIRLFRIENDS AND I DON'T KNOW WHAT!"

"You couldn't even tell us before that those two monkeys lived on the very DK Island and were your schoolmates!" the lead orangutan added.

"Because you never listen to us and ignore us!" Jemky replied pointing at them and making them more enraged.

"Urgh, naughty and insolent boys! RIGHT NOW, THE ROOMS ARE GOING TO BE CLEANED BY YOU!"

The mandrills and the leading orangutan grabbed and pulled each of the four kids by the ears, and carried them almost dragging to the other door and then releasing and throwing them out of the room as if throwing an object.

"By the way, weren't you going to give us guns if we caught all those kids?" Melenky asked them after they were released.

"WE ALREADY TOLD YOU THAT WE WON'T LET YOU USE GUNS AFTER WHAT HAPPENED TO JEMKY THREE MONTHS AGO!" the lead orangutan replied. "Guns do NOT fall from the sky! And you'll also clean that jet ski for taking it without permission and breaking it down! And right now, you'll REPAIR IT!"

Without letting them say another word, the apes slammed the door shut and secured it, leaving the four children outside.

"These kids don't change!" the apes very angry complained. "Nor because we send them to school to study."

Meanwhile, Diddy and Dixie, from their respective positions, shrugged their shoulders and smiled even a little after seeing the scolding imposed by the mandrills and orangutans on the four annoying kids. But then, both began again to fear for those apes. Diddy had yet to figure out how he would get Dixie out of there, while several thoughts were hovering in his mind after hearing everything the four evil kids had said.

Then the adult apes started walking around the lab. All of them adjusted their short cloaks and necklaces of different dark colors that they wore. They also wore in their arms thick bracelets of the same color as their short cloaks; It was as if they were in uniform, as the team they were.

"Well, let's wait for Will to bring the star scalpel to start with these brat kids," said the leading orangutan, who wore a dark green cloak and necklace, before heading to another corner of the room where there were some shelves. "Meanwhile, I'll be crushing the quartz to make the intravenous mixtures."

Both Diddy and Dixie didn't understand anything those apes were talking about or what they were planning, but what they two were sure from what they heard was that it wouldn't be anything good.

Suddenly, the internal door of that room suddenly opened. The other orangutan, who wore a black cloak and necklace, returned again in a hurry and with a rectangular mechanical device in his hands.

"Hey!" the orangutan exclaimed while holding the device which also had external cables. "The electric scalpel broke down!"

"*What?!?*" the mandrills exclaimed, going immediately to look at this device. "But how is it possible?! And now what do we do?!"

"And not only that: *it doesn't have the blade! It's missing!*" the other orangutan added, showing quite angry and showing one of the cables. "I can't even find the spare blades... And you know something else? I found it *under one of the boys' beds.*"

"*But...?!?*" one of the mandrills exclaimed, before he started screaming in anger. "*Oh, no! THOSE FOUR! We told them not to touch any of these machines!*"

"Wait a minute!" the lead orangutan exclaimed, who was rummaging through the shelves before, and then turned to the rest of the apes. "Where are the colored quartz?!"

"We had left them there, Ray," one of the mandrills replied, apparently calling him by name. "Why?"

"Because they're not here!" the lead orangutan replied, showing a glass box, from which he took a small colorful quartz. "There is only one."

"But..." one of the mandrills said, looking confused along with the rest. "And that?"

Then, the green cloak leader orangutan, totally changed his face, put away the glass box, almost breaking it, and began to scream again.

" URGH, LET'S BRING THOSE BOYS BACK! Maybe it was them, no one else has entered here!"

"We'll bring them right now! WE'LL BRING THEM!" one of the mandrills exclaimed, who wore a brown cloak, adopting the same expression.

Suddenly, two of the mandrills in the group immediately left the room taking long and firm steps. It took a minute, when on the return, they came bringing from the ears again the four bully kids.

"You guys! You have to explain this to us!" one of the mandrills exclaimed, at the same time that they released the four abruptly into the room.

"Ugh! And now *what do you want?!*" Jemky replied, raising his voice while rubbing his ear as the other three.

"Did you damage this?!" another mandrill asked them sternly, showing them the electric scalpel machine. *"And where are the blades?!"*

Suddenly, the four of them were silent for a while, as they watched the device. Later... among them they looked at Jemky sideways.

"What's up? Why are you looking at me?" Jemky asked them, looking strangely at the other three and adjusting his vest, specifically, his pockets.

"What's in your pockets, Jemky?!" the lead orangutan asked, looking at him harshly when he noticed his gestures.

"Uhh, n-nothing!" Jemky replied, tightening his vest.

The green-cloak leader orangutan, who was apparently Jemky's father, grabbed his tufts, and began to check every pocket of his vest... Until from one of them, he took out some objects and showed them to the rest of the apes.

"The blades!" exclaimed one of the mandrills, who wore a red short cloak, taking what appeared to be scalpel blades, and watching them. *"And they are... broken... and burned! And these things stuck here at the ends are remains of... paper! You guys were cutting PAPER?!"*

"No, no, no!" Melenky hastened to reply. "We can explain to you, it's photographic paper and-"

"Shut up," Jemky whispered, elbowing him, without looking away the adult apes.

"Photographic paper?! This is NOT for cutting paper!" the mandrill shouted at them. *"Paper burns the blades! Were you wasting the photographic paper?!... And what did we tell you about taking these devices before we left?!"*

"And we have another question!" the other black-lapel orangutan interrupted, showing them the glass box they had taken from the shelves. *"Did you take the quartz?!"*

The four of them fell silent again, as they looked sideways at each other.

"Uhh... quartz are those colored stones, aren't they?" Melenky asked, to which the other three kids threw murderous looks at him.

"Where are they?! What did you do with them?!" the adult apes exclaimed, quite angrily.

Suddenly, Mandrew, Rocky and Melenky began to look sideways again at Jemky, to which Jemky beckoned them as if he wanted to tell them not to answer anything to adult apes.

"Jemky!" the lead orangutan exclaimed, staring at him again. "Do you have anything to say?!"

"N-no... *No!*" Jemky replied firmly but trembling at the same time. "I don't know! We don't know anything!"

"*Tell us the truth!*" the orangutan replied, raising his voice more. "If you don't tell us the truth, *we will whip you!*"

"Rocky!" one of the mandrills exclaimed, who wore a brown cloak and was apparently Rocky's father. "I want you to tell us what you did with those quartz!"

"W-well... See... About the jet ski..." Rocky replied, looking sideways at the other three kids. "What happens is that we use those stones to decorate a painting that-"

Immediately, Jemky began to pinch Rocky's arm in disguise, to which Rocky pushed his hand away.

"*Rocky!* I want the *whole* truth!" the brown-lapel mandrill replied, raising his voice more. "What happened to those quartz?! Or we will punish you all!"

"Ugh, so that! We made a *painting* and used those stones," Rocky replied before sighing. "And if you want the truth, so... do you know how the jet ski broke down? It was because the trunk was broken at the bottom, and Jemky and Melenky had kept some things there and then the stones broke off the painting and passed into the engine, and it exploded... Are you happy?" he added, shrugging and rolling his eyes. "You'll no longer whip us, will you?"

The apes were gawking at Rocky's explanation. Suddenly, little by little, they became extremely *furious*, while the quartet of kids began to look at them with some fear.

"Where is *the whip*?!" the brown-lapel mandrill exclaimed, turning to the other apes. "*Pass us the whip!*"

"*Hey!* Didn't you want the truth?!" Rocky replied.

Without saying more, the leading orangutan took some whips off the shelves and then handed them to two of the mandrills, and they immediately walked quickly towards the quartet, whipping the whips in the air twice. Meanwhile, the quartet began to be frightened and to beg for mercy.

"*Give the four of them their due!*" the lead orangutan ordered the two mandrills.

"*No, no, no! WAIT!*" the four kids exclaimed, moving away from the apes and, at the same time, protecting each other. "*We'll get more of those stones and that scalpel!*"

The four immediately left the room and began to run in terror, while two of the mandrill apes left to chase them with whips in hand.

"*COME BACK HERE, LITTLE IMPS!*" the mandrills were heard shouting.

The other three apes stayed in the room, and then closed the door, all very angry.

"Always these boys!" the apes complained, stomping their feet. "*They think things fall from the sky!*"

"And now what do we do? Without that scalpel and those quartz, we can't do *anything*," one of the mandrills exclaimed, still angrily. "Especially that scalpel; without that we cannot start."

"Urgh, we'll think about what to do!" the leader orangutan added, grumbling. "For now, we have to leave all these brat kids in the cells. Meanwhile, we'll have to find a way to get more quartz and those blades for the scalpel... Ugh, we even have to go to the bosses again, and we're going to have to steal them; this time they won't want to give us new ones."

"Blast!" the mandrill, who wore a red cloak, exclaimed. "Don't tell me we have to cross the whole sea again, Ray. The weather is not even so good for sailing; that hurricane is coming here."

"Well, that's what we'll have to do, Terry," the lead orangutan added, his hands to his temple, still angry. "These naughty boys! They always come out with some antics!"

"By the way, we have to lock the chimpanzee girl apart," the other orangutan said, looking toward Dixie.

"Aren't we going to include her with these other children as well?" the mandrill asked.

"No, because she didn't get the hypnotizing mixture; she's all conscious and will go wrong with the procedure. Although anyway, we could consider it."

"Well, so, let's send her to the cells first. And fast! That we're going to have to almost teleport from here to get another scalpel and other quartz where the bosses are."

The two orangutans and the mandrill pulled Dixie out of the mechanical chair, and began to carry her in their arms out of the room, while she screamed and shuddered to get untied from them.

"Stay still if you want us to have mercy on you, girl!" the mandrill ordered, holding her tighter.

The mandrill took Dixie away, while the two orangutans continued to do the same with the rest of the kong children, although these, on the other hand, didn't put up resistance and didn't show any fear.

Diddy went into despair as he thought about how he was going to reach that mandrill that was taking Dixie. He recalled that on the facades of the building there were several high windows on the upper floors, so he assumed that the cells mentioned by those apes would be found there.

Diddy immediately came down from the window and walked through the corridors again. He knew that he would have to find some stairs or something to get to the top floors, and he had to do it as quickly as possible. If he was ever able to face those apes, he wanted to be sure he could do it again... even if this time he was in more danger...

We're halfway through the fanfic. Yes... here is the half, because the next chapters will be long... and hold on tight from now on.

Chapter 62: Unexpected Reunion

While walking too stealthily and quickly through the interior of that building, Diddy went through one of the corridors, where he saw a large entrance, which had a greater illumination than the rest of the rooms; that caught his attention and he immediately went there. But suddenly, he stopped in his tracks when he could hear four known voices nearby, so he immediately hid behind the walls.

"Ugh, why did this building have to be so big?" Jemky complained as he walked out of a door, along with the other three kids, all carrying handkerchiefs, mops and brooms. In addition... each of them rubbed his back, arms and hips as if they were sore.

"I think I was the one whom they whipped harder," Rocky said as he rubbed his back and made a look of pain.

"Well, you deserve it for ratting us out," Jemky said, rolling his eyes. "You could have told them something different about the jet ski."

"Shut up, this is your fault, it was your *idea*!" Rocky replied to Jemky. "Only you should have been whipped!"

"Huh, who says it!" Jemky replied in the same way. "You and Melenky are the biggest gossip! We could even have quietly gone to catch those stupid monkeys instead of calling our dads!"

"But we wouldn't have had the need to do it had it not been for your *whim to make those two break up*!"

"Yeah, yeah, get over it!" Jemky replied with a shrug. "Think that at least those two monkeys are not even together anymore. Poor little fool monkey, he must be crying alone on Hurricane Island if he's still alive," he added in a mocking tone.

The four of them walked out of that room and kept walking through the corridors. They even passed near the wall where Diddy was hiding, but luckily, they couldn't see him.

"Bah! I'm tired of cleaning," Jemky was heard saying. "I'd better go to our room to rest for a while."

"Hey, but we're just getting started," Rocky said.

"Our dads went out right now; they won't know whether we clean or not," Jemky replied with a shrug. "Or let's spy or bother those captured kids, what do you say?"

"Sounds good, I want too. I'm getting bored," Melenky added in the same way. "Or let's play spy through those kids."

"You go there; I had had enough of using them," Rocky added.

Diddy walked close to the wall stealthily and, when he had the four of them farther away, he ran out into the illuminated room. He turned for a while and gave a furious glance at the four of them from a distance; he would go out at that time to confront them, but he had to keep a low profile if

he wanted to have a safe escape from that place. The only thing that gave him satisfaction was remembering that at least the group of adult apes had recently given them their punishment due.

Diddy noticed that in the room where he was now, there was a huge staircase leading to the highest floors of the building. Looking around to make sure he wasn't seen by anyone, he started climbing the stairs as fast as he could. He had heard the four bully kids say that they would go to bother the captured children, but for some reason, it didn't seem to be the case, as they didn't show up again, so Diddy just continued on his way.

During the journey, Diddy was thinking several things... like the fact that Dixie *never* really lied to him; all the drama had been in vain and now he felt like a fool for not believing her even though he didn't know what to think about what Jemky had shown, and just thinking about how bad Dixie may have felt. Now he just hoped that, after everything happened, Dixie wanted to give him another chance, although he didn't know if he would have it back, since he assumed that Dixie wouldn't do it after having seen him along with Jenny. And, speaking about Jenny, Diddy was more regretful than ever of having struck up a friendship with that other group whom he considered "friends"; he should never have trusted them, since in the end they turned out to be complicit in the whole matter as well. However, Diddy knew *another detail* about them... and if he were to prove it to Dixie, maybe she could consider him another chance.

Diddy searched through some of the rooms on each level of the building, until he reached the last ones of it. On the penultimate floor, there was a quite spacious room, which Diddy entered. Around that whole room, there were a bunch of empty cells. The atmosphere was so heavy that even Diddy was starting to tremble with fear.

Suddenly, he looked into each of the cells and was shocked when he realized that he was being watched, from one of them, by a group of the same *kong children* who had been captured. Diddy stood still, begging the children not to make any noise when they saw him... But no, those children just stared at him and didn't even make an expression of amazement when they saw him.

"Uhh... Hi!" Diddy said to them with a forced smile, but received no answer; they continued to stare at him. He approached the cell to talk to them better. "Don't tell anyone you've seen me," he whispered as he looked everywhere in case anyone was coming. "How did those mandrills and orangutans kidnap you?... Did they give you any hypnotizing mixture as they said?"

But the children didn't respond to him at all; they were as if they were mannequins looking at Diddy, and they didn't even make a gesture or an expression at him.

"R-Ri... Ricky... Me-Mel..." one of them began to stutter.

"Ricky, Melvyn, Jenny and Mandy?!" Diddy hurried to ask them. "What did they do to you?!"

But the kong children didn't respond anymore, so Diddy had to give up.

Diddy continued to search the cells to find Dixie. He left the room and then climbed the stairs again until he reached the next and last floor of the building. In this, there was also a room with several cells around. Diddy entered and began to inspect each of the cells: they were all empty and there was no noise inside the room... except for some external sounds that seemed to come from a duct that was in the center of the roof that, when looking under it, had a skylight appearance.

Suddenly, Diddy heard a different little sound, it wasn't as loud and it seemed to come from one of the last cells in the room. He immediately headed there, until the sound became more and more like

sobs. Being closer, Diddy peeked stealthily into the cell where they seemed to come from... His heart began to race, while a small smile was drawn on his face when finally... *he had found Dixie*. But his smile faded as he saw that Dixie was just sitting against the wall as several tears welled up in her eyes and she kept trembling with fear. She hadn't noticed Diddy yet.

Diddy hid again, but he knew he had to talk to her anyway, regardless of whether she would be happy to see him or not. He took a heavy breath before calling her.

"D-Dixie?"

Dixie opened her eyes instantly and turned little by little to see who was calling her, since that voice was the most known to her. She made a gesture of astonishment and was all paralyzed to see with her own eyes the very Diddy, because she never imagined a bit that he would appear in that place and in that way.

"D-Di... Diddy!" she stammered before closing her eyes tightly and speaking to herself. "No, no, no. I must not think about Diddy, he doesn't-"

"Yes, it's me, Dixie," Diddy interrupted hurriedly, placing his hands on the bars.

Dixie looked up at him again, as she couldn't seem to believe that she was seeing him.

"But... H-how... have you come here?" she asked him as she wiped away her tears and headed to him.

"I was on that ship too!" he whispered. "I was going to Mr. Pinky's house, when I saw those hooded apes entering and heard that they had caught you and the other children on that ship, so I ran immediately and infiltrated! Then I went through this building and found you!" he explained quickly.

Dixie was quite shocked at what Diddy said; she was even still trying to process that she had him in front of her.

"I came to get you out of here, Dixie," Diddy said, looking everywhere in the room. "H-how can this cell be opened?"

"Uhh... according to me, these cells here are opened by pressing that over there button," Dixie pointed through the bars to a panel at the entrance to the room. Diddy was about to run over there, but Dixie stopped him instantly, grabbing him by the T-shirt. "*But...* it opens only with a footprint of those who live here, and if you press it, an alarm will be triggered."

"Oh, what then?!" Diddy said frustrated.

"By the way, you don't even know who I found here-"

"Yes, I know, those four fools from school and those criminal apes," Diddy interrupted, speaking fast. "I also heard and saw everything when you were in those mechanical chairs... I see now where the bad blood of those four fools comes from. Ah, and those apes must be plotting something terrible with all those kids... But I'm going to get you out of here, Dixie! Don't worry... Oh, will there be any other way to open this?" he added, looking everywhere in the cell.

"Diddy... In case you don't remember what I told you... once you enter here, it's almost impossible to get out," Dixie said, tears coming again from her eyes and beginning to sob in fear.

"Oh, no, no. Don't say that, Dix. Of course we'll get out of here," Diddy hurriedly told her as he held her hand through the bars. There was a moment of silence as they both looked at each other in a distressed manner. Until Diddy remembered another important detail he had to tell her. "By the way, Dixie... Please, forgive me... for not having believed you that... that letter was fake and all that."

Suddenly, and as if for a moment she got out of context, Dixie gave Diddy an angry look and immediately pulled her hand away from him in disgust. She then turned her back to him.

"Oh, please, Dixie! I'm really sorry!" Diddy exclaimed desperately. "I also heard that from them and-"

"You believed that burnt-hair orangutan and not me, Diddy Kong," Dixie interrupted angrily before turning back to him.

"Please, Dixie! Forgive me," Diddy added with a pleading look. "If you want, we'll figure out later about the rest of the evidence that that stupid showed, but please... forgive me... Please."

"Do you know anything, Diddy? I think we're more likely to get out of here than for me to forgive you," Dixie told him before turning back and crossing her arms. "Let alone for what you *did afterwards* when I just wanted to fix things with you."

"Are you talking about Jenny?" asked Diddy. "No, no, no, *I can* explain it! I don't love her or anything! We weren't really going to go on a date at that moment you arrived, it was just-"

"Huh, and so what happened?!" interrupted Dixie by turning in front of him. "You even told her that-"

"I'll explain, Dixie! Don't think I cheated on you! Not at all!"

"How not?! You even told her about what happened-"

"Jenny is a robot!" Diddy interrupted, raising his voice a little more.

"What?..."

"Yes, how you heard it! She's not a real girl!"

Dixie fell silent as she made an extreme glance of weirdness at Diddy after what he had just uttered. She looked at him as if he were a lunatic and as if he had told her an incoherence... Suddenly, Dixie began to want to laugh, before letting out a low-voiced laugh because of how weird what Diddy said sounded to her.

"Wait, wait, wait! Could you repeat that to me, Diddy?" Dixie said, trying to stop laughing.

"That's the truth, she's a *robot*! I'm serious!" said Diddy earnestly and quickly as he waved the bars. "That's something I wanted to tell you this afternoon, but I didn't find you anymore!"

"But what... excuse is that?" Dixie interrupted, continuing her laughter in a low voice. "A... *robot*? Hey, Diddy, what are you talking about-"

"Yes, it's true, Dixie!" replied Diddy. "Jenny is not like us, she's not real, she's *a machine, literally!* And not only her! Ricky, Melvyn and Mandy too! All four of them are *robots*... Ugh, I knew you wouldn't believe me so easily."

"Wait, wait, wait a minute, Diddy," Dixie interrupted, finishing laughing and looking at him strangely. "Tell me how you discovered it or what you're trying to tell-"

"It's that I was just sitting on a tree branch and then Jenny came, she tried to flirt with me again and cornered me, and then I pushed her and accidentally made her fall to the ground and I went to see if she was okay, but she didn't react. Then, I saw that she had something shiny in her eyes, and behind her ears I saw that she had some buttons that also shined, and I pressed them, and then her head opened and she had many wires inside and a pair of strange spheres, and she *even had a black box in the middle of her whole head!*" Diddy explained quickly.

Dixie gave him the same look of extreme strangeness, while still thinking that maybe he was crazy, so she let out a little laugh again; that sounded *most out of context* to her.

"Diddy, did you hit your head by any chance?!" she said, wanting to laugh. "Hey, Diddy, I wouldn't have a problem either if you just told me you actually wanted to date Jenny and-"

"You really don't believe me?!" Diddy interrupted in frustration, before pausing before. "It doesn't matter, I'll take you out of this place anyway!"

Diddy began to wobble the cell hard, as if in that way he managed to open it. While Dixie just continued to laugh a little and think that at least Diddy had done well to arrive to make her laugh for a while. Then, Dixie became serious again while looking at Diddy.

"Look, Diddy..." she said in a calmer tone. "I also have no problem hearing the truth, so you can just tell me if Jenn-"

"Just in case, I never liked her, Dixie," Diddy interrupted, still defending his version, looking at her seriously. "And I'm really sorry I didn't believe you. But I can tell you that Jenny, Ricky, Melvyn and Mandy *are robots!*"

Dixie only continued to look at him with all weirdness when she saw that Diddy repeated the same somewhat illogical and absurd statement to her.

"*BUT WHAT?!*" exclaimed suddenly a voice that belonged to neither of them. "*DIDDY!*"

Diddy and Dixie got scared and turned to look at the entrance of the room and, as if the universe was conspiring against them... the same *Jenny* was heading towards them while keeping the same expression of shock as the two of them. All three were extremely astonished to meet again.

Before long, Dixie looked quite seriously at Diddy.

"No, no, no! I don't know what she's doing here!" Diddy whispered, all in confusion.

Diddy began to tremble in fear at the sight of Jenny approaching, not so much because Dixie was going to think wrong, but because that would mean being found out and being in grave danger.

"Ahh, Diddy! But how did you get here?!" Jenny exclaimed, shocked when she reached the two of them. "How did you get in? I didn't know you were coming too."

"No, no, Jenny... *or whatever you are!* Don't tell anyone I'm here, please!" said Diddy desperately as he grabbed her arms.

"Wow. I was just coming to check on Dixie," Jenny said as she looked sideways at Dixie. "But now it turns out that you're here too, Diddy... How cute you are," she added, patting his face in a flirtatious manner.

"Well, what are you going to say now, Diddy?" Dixie whispered with a serious look.

"Oh, poor one," Jenny said to Dixie in a mocking manner, to which she looked at her strangely. "How dumb and naïve you were when you thought Diddy loved you, Dixie."

"By the way, Jenny," Dixie replied in kind. "When I told you I wasn't going to fight you for Diddy, *I was serious*, I'm not a fake double-faced one like you."

"Yeah, yeah, whatever you say," Jenny replied in the same tone. "But what a pity that your relationship *didn't* turn out to be indestructible."

"And by the way, are you also complicit with those criminal apes?!" Dixie asked more seriously.

"What? What are you talking about?" Jenny exclaimed with a strange look.

Suddenly, Diddy seemed to realize that *this* might be his chance to *prove* what he claimed.

"Uhh, Jenny," Diddy said as he got closer to her. "I think you have something in your ear."

"Huh? What?" Jenny asked, her hand to her ear.

"*This!* "

Immediately, Diddy lunged at Jenny, but she tried to push him away.

"Hey! *Oh no, no, not that!*" Jenny exclaimed as she struggled against Diddy when he tried to grab her ears. "*Let go of me, dumb monkey!*"

Suddenly, Jenny began to hit Diddy a few times, which made it difficult for him to get it.

"Hold her, Dixie!" Diddy exclaimed before pushing Jenny against bars.

Dixie, though not quite understanding the situation, held Jenny by the shoulders anyway. While Diddy, after receiving a pair more blows from Jenny, took her by the ear forward and pressed it hard... Suddenly, Jenny stopped in her tracks and began to loosen her arms until she was *completely paralyzed*... Literally, she stayed like a mannequin... All her movements stopped... And she even no longer seemed to breathe or blink...

Diddy was breathing heavily after managing to stop Jenny, while Dixie was more confused by what happened, that no longer knew if she was just dreaming random and incoherent things.

"Look! Do you believe me now?" Diddy said to Dixie, taking Jenny by the shoulders and turning her toward Dixie's direction. "If you want, touch her eyes and you'll see that *they're not real.*"

Dixie, with a blank mind and extreme confusion at the sudden event, stretched out her hand through the bars and proceeded to touch Jenny's eyes... Indeed, they felt with a texture similar to a

rubber, even her pupils didn't seem to be like those of a real living being, since when touching them, Dixie realized that they were rather... like *glass*.

Jenny was *now still in her entirety*, as if she were a doll: she didn't blink, she didn't breathe, and her eyes were opened wide with a fixed gaze. Her eyes also emitted a dim light as did her ears.

"Look at this," Diddy said to Dixie before pressing behind Jenny's other ear.

Upon he did so, Jenny's head literally began to split in half as if a puzzle piece was coming off... and, as Diddy had explained, inside it they could see a bunch of small wires connected to each other, and also a pair of spheres that apparently connected to what would be her eyes... In addition to having a black mechanical box in the center... All just as Diddy had described it.

Dixie was frightened to see Jenny's head split open, and only gasped as she tried to process and wonder if what she was seeing at the moment was real. It was something that never crossed her mind, not even dreaming.

"And look at this too," Diddy added.

Diddy took Jenny's arm and, as if it were a sleeve, pulled back her fur with some force, where under this, other wires could be seen inside and connected to her hand. Then, he did the same with her other three remaining limbs, in which wires could also be seen inside.

Dixie was left with almost the same posture as Jenny: completely paralyzed. She didn't know what to say or what to think about it now.

"B-but..." was the only thing Dixie could utter before looking away, confused in her entirety and finishing processing what she had just seen.

"Ricky, Melvyn and Mandy are like that too," Diddy said earnestly. "You don't even would believe everything that happened: after you left yesterday, I was asking Jenny what she really was, and later, out of nowhere Ricky, Melvyn and Mandy arrived and made me a kind of kidnapping; they were behaving quite weird and I insisted that they give me an explanation, but they just ignored me. Until later, I managed to escape and tried to catch them and there I saw that all four are of this kind of robots... By the way, I think that explains why those four didn't like water or never wanted to eat or drink anything with us."

"But it's that..." Dixie said, reaching out through the bars, grabbing Jenny's arms, and then touching her face, her hands, her hair, and again her eyes. "It's so *real*... Her skin looks and feels real, her hair and fur too... Even her way of speaking and moving is so... *realistic*... Why didn't you tell me about it before, Diddy?"

"That's what I was going to tell you this afternoon, but you weren't in the house."

"But why didn't you tell me yesterday that I saw you with her?"

"Dixie, I knew you wouldn't believe something like that so easily for a quick explanation," he replied before pausing and lowering his gaze. "Oh... and forgive me, Dixie... I was really angry with you for what I thought had happened, and I didn't know what to say to you when you arrived suddenly while I was with Jenny, that is, I didn't know how to explain to you that Jenny is really like that, I didn't even finish believing it, and at the same time, I didn't want to fix things with you because I really thought the matter had no fix... And no, I wasn't dating Jenny, I was just chasing

her to get more information out of her, but she didn't want to tell me anything more about her being a robot."

"Oh, but you could tell me anyway!" replied Dixie before remaining calm. "Ugh, maybe you're right, I don't think I could have believed that so easily, even now I didn't want to believe it... Anyway, we'll talk later about; now we just have to get out of here--"

"Wait! What is that?" Diddy interrupted.

Suddenly, Diddy heard some rapid footsteps that seemed to be far away, but sounded as if they came from below.

"Wait a minute!" Diddy whispered before leaving for a while.

Diddy went to the entrance of the room and looked out of the stairs, from which he managed to observe a pair of known silhouettes coming up at speed through them.

"Fast! He's on the top floor!" exclaimed one of them who was coming up. "That monkey is there with Dixie!"

Diddy panicked instantly and immediately returned to Dixie; he knew he had to get her out of there no matter what.

"It's Rocky and Mandrew; they're coming here!" Diddy whispered desperately as he thought about what actions to take.

"Try pressing the button, it doesn't matter if it doesn't work for you, but it's the only alternative!" Dixie replied in the same way.

"Wait, I have an idea!"

Diddy, not knowing if what he had in mind would work, took Jenny by the shoulders and dragged her quickly to the entrance of the room. He reached the button that Dixie pointed to and took Jenny's hand to place her thumb to press the button... Instantly, all the cells in that room began to open.

Dixie immediately got out before the cell was fully opened, and ran to where Diddy was. They arranged Jenny motionless towards the wall, and then they both left the room as quickly as possible, barely having time to be glad they had gotten out there.

"What do we do now?!" Diddy asked himself desperately.

They peeked down the stairs and saw that Rocky and Mandrew were one floor away from arriving, so it wouldn't be a good idea to go down there.

"Come this way! I already know how to go down!" Dixie whispered before taking Diddy's arm and heading to the end of the handrail of the stairs, where there was an interior balcony that had a view of the other floors. Dixie looked down, being determined in what she was going to do.

"Oh, no, no! Not again, Dixie!" Diddy exclaimed, getting the idea.

"We have no choice, I'm sorry!" Dixie replied, climbing onto the balcony railing and pulling Diddy toward her.

Diddy, not so sure, grabbed onto Dixie, and then she jumped with him from the balcony until she managed to land on one of the lower floors, with the help of her hair. Standing up to about three floors less, they looked up and saw Rocky and Mandrew enter the cell room. But they couldn't stay stopped for long, so they immediately ran in random directions across the floor where they now were.

"Now what?!" Dixie asked as they ran aimlessly through the halls of the building.

"I don't know!... Wait, wait!" Diddy replied before stopping in his tracks along with Dixie.

Both were about to cross an entrance, when suddenly, someone they knew was in the middle of it. Both Diddy and Dixie were frozen, when they now had run into *Melvyn*, who was staring at them... with the same expressionless face that Jenny had recently and still in his entirety.

"Mel-Melvyn?" Dixie stuttered.

"Don't worry, I think it's turned *off*," Diddy whispered to Dixie. "Although his eyes don't shine," he added, looking at him uncertainly.

Diddy took Dixie's hand, and they both began to take stealthy steps through the entrance, while Melvyn just remained still as a mannequin. Seeing that he didn't make any movement, they walked normally again and crossed the entrance without problems... Not before feeling that they were grabbed by the arm of both. They immediately turned around and saw that it was Melvyn who was holding them and trying to stop them.

"Hold him!" Diddy exclaimed to Dixie instantly. "Just turn it off!"

Melvyn was struggling with Diddy and Dixie not to let them escape, but it was not so difficult for both of them to pounce on him, since he was of smaller stature. Diddy and Dixie let go from him and took him by his arms and then held his head, then Diddy took him by the ear and, as he did with Jenny, pressed it... Instantly, Melvyn stopped moving and again had an expression of total seriousness as if he were a doll... just like Jenny had stayed.

"Hey... So... it's true?" Dixie said, being completely surprised to see Melvyn in that way now.

"Yes, I didn't believe it either when I discovered them," Diddy replied, also observing Melvyn. "And I don't know how they could be made so *realistic*. They don't look like robots, rather they look like-"

"They're over there! The dumb monkey managed to free Dixie!" exclaimed a voice heard from the other side of the wall that sounded exactly like Mandrew's.

"Let's run! Run!" Diddy whispered desperately.

Both continued to flee aimlessly so as not to be captured by Mandrew and Rocky, who could be heard running and talking at a not-so-distant distance.

"Let's go this way! There is a pipeline that leads outwards!" Diddy pointed as they ran. "That's where I was able to enter this building."

"I think I know which one you mean. That's where we got out with Tiny and Kiddy that time."

Both entered one of the corridors that were, in the direction of finding the duct through which Diddy had managed to enter the building. When suddenly... both stopped immediately when they noticed a walking silhouette with a long cloak, at the end of that corridor. They were paralyzed, as they thought it would be one of the evil apes... But it didn't seem to be so. That silhouette seemed to look more like a muscular ape, and not a mandrill or orangutan. It was all dark in the bottom, so they could not see that figure well.

Without thinking any more, Diddy and Dixie began to run in the opposite direction when they saw that silhouette beginning to head towards them as if it wanted to catch them.

"And who is that one?!" Dixie asked as she ran speedily with Diddy.

"I have no idea... *One minute!*" exclaimed Diddy, opening his eyes to the fullest when he managed to visualize that silhouette clearly.

Diddy and Dixie stopped in their tracks and just waited for the walking silhouette to finish reaching them.

"Mr. Pinky!" they both exclaimed in unison as he was arriving.

To their great surprise, the very *Mr. Pinky* was the one who was approaching them, although this time... he was wearing a black long cloak... similar to that of evil apes. Both were speechless and didn't know what to think, because they never imagined seeing him in that place. They didn't have time to start drawing conclusions, so they just let him approach them...

Chapter 63: Disturbing Discoveries

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

In the middle of that corridor, Mr. Pinky stopped in front of Diddy and Dixie, who had just calmed down when they saw him, before immediately running towards him.

"Mr. Pinky!" Diddy exclaimed, hugging his arm tightly and excitedly along with Dixie. "But w-what are you doing here?! How did you get here?"

"Weren't you at your school meeting?" Dixie asked. "And you have to leave here; this place is dangerous!" she added in a low voice, looking sideways in fear.

Suddenly, they both realized something very strange... Mr. Pinky *didn't answer them*; he just looked at them in a fixed and serious way, similar to when he got angry with intensity.

"Uhh... Are you okay, mister?" Dixie asked, looking at him strangely and beginning to have a bad feeling.

Suddenly, Mr. Pinky put his hand inside his cloak and, as if suddenly it wasn't him, pulled out a *firearm*. He immediately pointed to Diddy and Dixie, which left them both too confused.

"B-but what's wrong with him?!" Diddy whispered by grabbing and squeezing Dixie's arm.

Both gave a terrified scream and began to flee at speed when suddenly, Mr. Pinky began to press the trigger and let out a shot instantly. He then began to chase them as well.

Diddy and Dixie were running as fast as their four limbs gave them, while both were still in a state of panic at what they witnessed. They had no idea what was wrong with Mr. Pinky, but for the moment they just needed to run away and hide while feeling a huge continuous adrenaline.

Mr. Pinky was speeding after Diddy and Dixie, walking through several corridors of the building. From time to time, he dropped a shot with the gun, which made the two of them stand on end as they tried not to get caught.

"What's wrong with Mr. Pinky?!" Diddy exclaimed in horror as he ran along with Dixie. *"Why does he want to shoot us?!"*

Then, Diddy and Dixie were approaching an area where there were two corridors that led to different routes, which left them undecided and barely had time to choose where to go. Both thought differently at that moment and each ran to each of the two corridors.

"Dixie!" Diddy exclaimed, stopping in his tracks, and then running to where Dixie was going.

Suddenly, Mr. Pinky appeared in front of Diddy by surprise, so he stopped and continued running down that same corridor, while the teacher was chasing him and pointing the gun at him. Diddy just ran in terror and aimlessly while feeling an intense fear for Mr. Pinky like never before.

"Diddy!" Dixie exclaimed in the same way.

Dixie, not knowing what to do now, ran again to try to catch up with Diddy, whom she had already lost sight of as well as Mr. Pinky. Suddenly, she heard a gunshot... which only left her thinking the worst. But she continued to run and try to at least locate Diddy.

Later, Dixie no longer heard any noise or saw any trace of Diddy or Mr. Pinky, so she stopped while thinking about where to go. Suddenly, she heard someone whisper her name, to which she immediately turned to look at who it was. Luckily, it was Diddy, who was hiding in a short corridor leading to a door. Dixie felt enormous relief to see him safe, and headed towards him.

"Diddy!" Dixie exclaimed quietly, taking him by the shoulders. "Are you okay?"

"Yes. I managed to lose sight of him," Diddy replied in the same volume of voice and breathing heavily. "I-I don't know what's wrong with Mr. Pinky, why does he want to kill us?"

"I have no idea; I think that's not Mr. Pinky... First of all, *what would he do here?* How did he get in here?!"

"Yes, it's him. We clearly saw his face!"

Suddenly, Mr. Pinky's voluptuous silhouette appeared in front of them by surprise and pointed the gun at them. Diddy and Dixie screamed as they felt the circulation at their feet drop and, with nowhere else to run, they opened the door next to them and entered. Both began to run aimlessly around the room, which they entered while Mr. Pinky was chasing them. The room was so dark that it made it difficult for them to see.

Suddenly, both stumbled and began to fall down what seemed to be steps, in which they were beating. A moment later, they managed to regain their balance and continued to descend at speed, all in order not to be seen by Mr. Pinky, who continued to chase them.

When they reached the bottom of the stairs, Diddy and Dixie rushed to find a shortcut that would divert them, but everything was even darker and they could not see almost anything. What they did see was a closet that was nearby and, having no other alternative, they rushed to hide behind it and try to make as little noise as possible.

Mr. Pinky also reached that area, but apparently, he just stopped to look everywhere. Then, he started walking around that room, gun in hand and as if trying to locate the pair of kongs. He even passed near the closet where the two of them were hiding behind.

Diddy and Dixie, as the teacher passed by, were clinging to each other tightly while feeling enormous tension and their hearts beating at a fairly fast rate, begging in their minds that Mr. Pinky wouldn't see them.

A minute later, Mr. Pinky seemed to stop and went back to the stairs, then climbed up it until his footsteps were heard farther and farther away. Later, the door was heard closing, before there was absolute silence.

"Has he already left?" Diddy whispered as he trembled and still clung to Dixie.

"It seems so," Dixie replied in kind, though later... she noticed the closeness she was having with Diddy at that moment and turned away from him immediately.

"Oh... I'm sorry," Diddy said with a forced smile.

Both walked stealthily while observing that no one would be inside that room. Then, they headed back to the edge of the stairs and stared up.

"What happened to Mr. Pinky?" Diddy wondered, fearfully and regaining his normal tone. "How did he get here? And why does he have a gun and is dressed like those apes?!"

"That doesn't have to be him," Dixie said with a serious look. "I'm sure he would never want to hurt us like that... Or maybe those blasted apes did something to him!"

"Or perhaps... Mr. Pinky is also one of them and never told us anything?" Diddy questioned, feeling more afraid. "Or he's complicit with those apes and that's why he wanted to have us in his house all this time?!"

"No, I don't think so," Dixie replied, calming him down. "When I was here, I *had never* seen Mr. Pinky."

"Or could it be that... Mr. Pinky *is also a robot* like Jenny, Melvyn, Ricky and Mandy?"

"No, Diddy, I don't believe that either. Mr. Pinky had none of the manias that those four had; we saw him eat and have contact with water... Only, it would be necessary to find out what is the explanation of his behavior that he had now..."

The two continued to look up while thinking if it would be safe to go up and if Mr. Pinky wouldn't be behind the door waiting for them. Suddenly, an enormous uncertainty seemed to be consuming them both when they found themselves in that situation.

"Oh, on what matter did we get into," Diddy lamented, before entering a moment of silence as they still had thousands of thoughts. "Oh, I'm really sorry, Dixie... for not having been with you when you were captured."

"Oh, they were going to capture us anyway, Diddy," Dixie replied. "And if we had been together at that time, we would have both been caught at the same time, and how were we going to get out in that situation?"

"I still don't understand what this all is," Diddy said, looking at the stairs for a while. "And first of all, what do they want to do with all those children?... And what do Jenny and the others have to do with those other four fools and those apes?"

"I don't have a clear idea... And I still want to know how that dumb idiot Jemky did all that, how did they know *everything* about us exactly?"

"Those stupids... They took us for fools somehow! And there's no way to make them pay right now, especially that burnt-hairs orangutan," Diddy said, before sighing and looking down. "Oh, Dixie... forgive me, I didn't want you and I to break up like this, I mean... I don't know how I could believe all that," he added, placing his hands on her shoulders. "Almost everything looked... so obvious."

Dixie looked at him not knowing what to answer at first. She didn't want to resume that topic for the time being, however, she also couldn't let it go without saying something about it.

"Diddy, you'll see..." she replied without looking at him at first, but then staying in front of him, "I was very upset that you couldn't believe in me, even though I begged you and even wanted to fix things with you."

"I know, but Jemky showed all that and said some things that only we were supposed to know, and that it was even impossible for them to know."

"But you could have believed only in my word, Diddy," Dixie replied, looking at him somewhat annoyed. "I don't know how you could have thought I would have done something like that."

"Dixie, I didn't want to think anything bad about you, I swear I wanted to think otherwise, but certain things didn't let me believe it... Ugh, that jerk Jemky, I don't know how he did all that," he said in frustration.

"Well... anyways, I can't blame you that much either, Diddy," she replied earnestly and with a shrug. "I was also like that when that matter about Jenny and the wrench happened... And I also want to know where that stupid orangutan got all those fake things from, how did he do it? Where did he get those photos, especially? I swear they have to be fake; *they never happened.*"

"It must have an explanation, although... several things don't fit well. We'll have to find out later if we can. The main question is... how did they find us on that island?"

"*Ugh*, and I swear I want to give that burnt-hairs Jemky his due," Dixie grumbled, before calming down a bit. "Anyways, we cannot just stay here or continue to wonder about this issue. Something must be done!"

Dixie resumed the way, began to climb the stairs, and Diddy went to follow her seconds later, until they both reached the door where they entered that area.

"We have to see if Mr. Pinky has already left," Dixie whispered, looking sideways at the door.

Dixie turned the doorknob as carefully as possible so as not to make noise, opened the door, and peeked out a little.

"There's no one," she whispered to Diddy. "I think it's safe right now."

"So, come on, we have to get out here," Diddy added in the same way.

Both peeked out of the door stealthily. There was no one in sight, so they were able to leave with no problems.

The two of them, after crossing the door and walking with silent steps, looked everywhere and began again to look for the shortcut to leave the building. When they reached each corner of the corridors, they looked out to see if no one came, and continued walking.

"What will we do with Mr. Pinky?" Diddy whispered on the way.

"Oh... I don't know," Dixie replied as she wondered the same thing and felt deep frustration. "He can't stay here either... And I don't really know what's wrong with him."

Suddenly, they heard some low sounds that sounded very changeable... Until little by little they were resembling voices that both knew perfectly, so they began to accelerate the steps. As they were about to turn a corner, two known silhouettes were walking nearby and at a sped pace, but luckily, they weren't looking straight ahead, so Diddy and Dixie ran to hide from their sights.

"Those monkeys don't get out of here alive!" Mandrew said, taking firm and quick steps.

"They don't even have a way out," Rocky added in the same way.

Diddy and Dixie, while hiding under a table they found, watched Mandrew and Rocky make their way to a door in front of them. And not only the two of them, *Melvyn* was also accompanying them... although the latter only followed them and didn't say any word.

Before Mandrew and Rocky entered through the door, Jemky got out and joined them. Melvyn, meanwhile, entered the room without saying anything as the other three watched him pass.

"Where did those dwarf monkeys go?" Jemky asked Mandrew and Rocky hurriedly.

"We couldn't reach them," Rocky replied. "They had even turned off Melvyn too."

"Ugh, our dads are going to kill us if they find out they escaped!" Jemky exclaimed, stomping.

"The four of us better go and look for them! If we catch those two, they'll be double prizes for our dads," replied Mandrew. "By the way, did you bring Jenny?"

"Yes, she's already here," Jemky replied, pointing into the room. "Melenky, hurry up, let's go find that pair of monkeys!"

"Wait, I can't get this thing out of me!" Melenky shouted from inside the room. "Come and help me!"

"Ugh, Melenky!" Mandrew said before entering the room and apparently helping him. "You just had to spin this... And that's all."

A few seconds later, Mandrew returned along with Melenky, and they were reunited with the other two in the group.

"Now, let's go get those two dumb monkeys!" Jemky said before closing the door.

Then, the four began to walk at a sped pace, and left from the area until they were out of sight.

Diddy and Dixie, still hiding, were left thinking for a few more seconds, while an enormous curiosity invaded their minds after the dialogue they had just heard from the four of them.

"Do... they all know that I'm here too?" Diddy whispered in confusion.

"I guess so. Jenny and Melvyn have seen us; it's obvious that they ratted us out," Dixie replied before pausing when suddenly another assumption crossed her mind. "But... the real question is: if Jenny and that group are *robots*... and if they are here... I think those four fools are the ones who *control* those others! They're even four ones too!"

"What are you saying?" Diddy questioned with a look of strangeness. "I mean, at first glance they don't seem to be robots. I think operating something like that would be very complex."

"What if we went into that room to investigate? It seems that those other four are inside."

"Are you crazy? It's risky!" Diddy contradicted. "We have to get out of here!"

"It'll only be a while! And anyways, we can't leave here yet without Mr. Pinky... Maybe we can even find out what happened to him."

Diddy wasn't so convinced of the idea, but he agreed anyway. They both watched everywhere, and then ran towards the room where the quartet of bully kids had gotten out from. They turned the doorknob carefully and entered, closed it instantly, and secured it for more safety.

"Wait a minute... this is a bedroom," Diddy said, looking into the room. "It looks pretty spacious, by the way."

Indeed, the room looked like a bedroom: it had large barred windows, a couple of bunk beds in the bottom, in addition to several boxes with children's toys, and walls that had bright colors. Although to tell the truth, the objects didn't seem to have been there that long.

"It must be the room of those four fools," Diddy said, looking at the toy boxes, which were filled mostly with miniature soldiers, balls and toy guns. Diddy took one of those toy soldiers and watched it in detail. "I think I've seen this toy before... Ah, I remembered, those fools stole it from other kids... All these toys are stolen, in fact!"

"Diddy, that's your pyramid, look!" Dixie pointed to another of the toy boxes.

In another of the boxes, there was what was clearly the pyramid that Diddy was going to submit to Mr. Pinky on the last day of school... although it didn't have the emerald at the top. Diddy took it and watched it as he recalled that day.

"*Stupid Jemky*," Diddy said, rolling his eyes. "I don't regret throwing it at him."

"You would have thrown it ten times at that *burnt-hairs*," Dixie added in the same tone. Then, she continued to go around the room. "Oh, you can tell this is their room; it's all messy," she said with disgust.

"Dixie, look over there!" Diddy pointed suddenly to a corner of the room.

In one of the corners, formed in a row and still like statues... Jenny, *Mandy*, *Ricky* and *Melvyn* were. The four looked like living dolls in a state of rest and with stares fixed and expressionless. Diddy and Dixie immediately headed towards them.

"It can't be..." Dixie said, now seeing the entire group in that state.

Diddy had already seen the four of them like that, but Dixie hadn't yet, so she gasped watching them, finishing processing the true forms those four kong children apparently had.

Dixie went towards Mandy and, as they did before with Jenny and Melvyn, took her left ear and pressed an almost unobservable button that she had and, likewise... her head opened in two parts like puzzles: inside it were several of what appeared to be wires, a pair of spheres as if they were eyes, and a black box in the center, all just like Jenny had. Then, she turned to Ricky and did the same thing: she pressed him behind his left ear... and his head also opened and had the same elements inside. Then, she did the same thing again with Melvyn and Jenny to make sure she wasn't raving or dreaming... And, indeed, all four were the same way.

Dixie turned to look at Diddy, still surprised and not knowing what to think about that quartet whom she once, along with Diddy, called "friends".

"B-but..." Dixie stammered, remaining pensive. Then, she looked at the four of them again not knowing what to do, but suddenly, she got a huge expression of shock when... *a sudden guess* came

to her mind.

"Yes, that's how they really are: they're machines," Diddy said, turning to Ricky and closing his head again and then observing him in detail. "Wow, but I still wonder... how could they be made so realistic? Just look, they look like they were real like-"

"Diddy..." Dixie interrupted, maintaining her shocked expression. She walked towards Melvyn and grabbed him from one of what appeared to be wires. These *are not* wires; I t-think they are... *It's like a real thing.*"

Diddy made a gesture of strangeness at what she said, and looked at her the same way she looked at him when he told her Jenny was a robot.

"Huh? What are you saying?" Diddy exclaimed, looking at her with extreme strangeness at what she had just said, and even caused him some funny. "How can they be...? What are you talking about, Dixie?"

"Yes! I mean..." Dixie said as she continued to look at the four of them in some panic. "Diddy... I t-think they're not *robots* exactly."

"What are you saying, Dixie? But it's clear that they are robots. Just look inside their heads; they have mechanical parts."

"Yes, but it's that... Oh, no, no, no, I don't think they are..." Dixie exclaimed before putting her hands to her temple and watching the four of them again with some trepidation.

"What are you trying to say, Dixie?" Diddy asked, still looking at her strangely.

Dixie wasn't sure about the idea that had just invaded her mind about that quartet, but at the same time, everything pointed to being true.

"Diddy, I don't know what you think, but..." she turned back to the four of them and took each of them by the fur. "Look at them, they look *very real*... Their movements also looked very real... I'm sure what looks like wires are *not*. And by the way... If they are here... with those evil apes, haven't you thought that they-"

"Wait, wait a minute," Diddy interrupted, also changing his expression. "Do you imply that the four of them are... No, I don't think so, Dixie."

"And I don't know if this has anything to do here, but... do you remember the first time we took them to the animal shelter and a gorilla mistook Ricky for his... *missing son*?... And when Mr. Pinky had said that Mandy also looked like... *a missing girl*?"

Diddy opened his eyes to the fullest and froze for a moment after the factors Dixie mentioned. Suddenly... he was also beginning to think about the same assumption she had.

"So... No, I don't think so. I mean, how is it possible... *that*?" Diddy questioned before remaining pensive for a while. "What if we turn them on and ask them or something? Of course, we would only have to hold them well in case they try to escape or attack us."

"Okay! Which one do we turn on first?"

"Let's try Melvyn, he's small and a little more docile; the others are wild."

Diddy and Dixie walked towards Melvyn and held his arms firmly.

"Don't let him slip away," Diddy said to Dixie. "Well, here we go."

Diddy reached for the power button behind Melvyn's ear and pressed it. After doing so, they both held him harder and waited for him to react... But it didn't.

"Why doesn't it turn on?" Diddy asked again, pressing the button again, but they received no answer from Melvyn. He pressed the button again repeatedly, but for some reason, nothing happened.

"Wait a minute," Dixie interrupted. "Weren't their eyes and ears supposed to shine? Because they're not shining now."

"So... are they totally off or what?"

They both let go of Melvyn and stared at him for a while; they were so curious to know what those four kong children who seemed to be mechanical robots really were.

Suddenly, they began to hear footsteps outside that room, which put them both on alert.

"Hide!" Dixie whispered, and then they went to hide under one of the beds. They waited a moment for nothing to be heard and got out again. "I'll go inspect the door. Keep trying to turn on those four."

Diddy headed back to the quartet, while Dixie headed for the door to make sure no one was around. She opened the door slowly and peeked out with barely half of her head. No one could be seen nearby and no noise was heard again, so she closed the door again and secured it.

Dixie walked towards Diddy again. She was walking near a sideboard, when suddenly, she felt that she stepped on an object lying on the ground. She turned to look at what it was and realized it was a *cassette* tape. She wasn't going to take it seriously, so she just picked it up to keep it in the drawers of the sideboard next to her. But then... she stopped in her tracks when she noticed that on the front, it had written in ink: "Day 55. Ship proposal to that pair of monkeys." Dixie made a surprised gesture at that, but anyway, she opened the drawer to put it away... In doing so, she got a surprise that reactivated her curiosity instantly: that drawer was full of several more *cassettes*, all neatly ordered and even numbered from one to eighty-one. She was extremely curious and took some of those cassettes at random... She opened her eyes more and more intensely upon seeing that those cassettes also had written titles that bore words that she could recognize instantly.

Meanwhile, Diddy was still trying unsuccessfully to turn on or manipulate the quartet to see if they would react and to receive an explanation from them.

"Diddy, you h-have to see this!" Dixie exclaimed from the chest of drawers where she was.

"Huh? What's wrong?"

Diddy headed to where Dixie was, who maintained an expression of shock as she checked the cassettes.

"What are those?" Diddy asked, also taking one of the cassettes.

Diddy was shocked to read that one of them had a title written: "Day 71. Wrench trap to that stupid monkey."

"But..." exclaimed Diddy, looking strangely.

"Read them all!" Dixie said as she also continued to inspect.

Both began to register those cassettes, which had written in ink, days numbered... besides titles that increased curiosity in both. On those cassettes it said titles like: "Day 65. The monkeys didn't go to work and we had to go and apologize", "Day 56. Carnivorous plant", "Day 26. We found those dumb monkeys", "Day 31. We became friends with those two stupids", "Day 80. We managed to get those pathetic monkeys to break up!"

Both Diddy and Dixie gasped and confused at what they saw. What filled them most with intrigue was... why in *cassettes like those* they said data known to the two of them?

"B-but... And this...?" Diddy stuttered.

"Look at that!" Dixie pointed to an object on top of the sideboard.

A TV set with a rectangular device underneath, rested on the sideboard, which was apparently a video player that generated an uncontrollable curiosity to both.

"Let's try them!" Dixie said as she inserted one of the cassettes into the device and began to press the buttons. "Uhh... how was this used?"

"I think it's this way," Diddy replied before manipulating the device as well. "It's disconnected, wait. Just don't turn on the volume too much."

Diddy looked for some point of electricity nearby and plugged in the appliance to turn it on. Then, he finished placing the cassette well. They waited a few seconds, when suddenly, the TV screen lit up and began to emit some images... or rather, a *video*... Video which showed through *four different sub-screens*, an environment well known and previously seen by both.

"It can't be... Is that Hurricane Island?" Diddy whispered as he stared intently at the screen along with Dixie. A few seconds later, they both made a shocking gesture at what they saw. "Dixie! That's you?!"

In one of the sub-screens, several bushes could be observed around, and then... *Dixie* rushing over.

(*Aha! Here you are, Melvyn! Now it's your turn to be the shark monkey*), Dixie was seen and heard saying in the video... And as if she were saying to the camera.

"Say what?!" Dixie exclaimed, shocked and confused at what she had just seen.

Then, the screen that Dixie approached, began to move and, apparently, to chase her. What could be seen later, generated a huge shocking sensation for Diddy and Dixie: Diddy also appeared later in the video and, likewise... *Jenny, Mandy and Ricky*. They were all seen running and climbing around a mountainous area. They looked very happy as if they were playing, but the most curious thing of all, was that in the four sub-screens the same scene was seen, or rather... each sub-screen seemed to show the *point of view of each of the four*.

"W-w-what is this?!" Diddy exclaimed with an expression as if he had seen a ghost.

"But if those... *it's us*," Dixie added in the same way, "*with those four*."

"That's the day... where we went to play 'shark monkey' in those mountains," Diddy added without looking away from the screen.

(*I'll catch you all, you'll see!*), Melvyn was heard saying in the video... although this time, his voice sounded differently and as if it was *intersected with a second voice*.

"Wait a minute," Diddy said, holding the same expression. "Doesn't that voice sound like..."

"*M-Melenky 's?*"

"That one!" Diddy exclaimed, still trying to process what he saw. "H-how is this..."

(*You can't catch me!*), Diddy told Melvyn in the video as everyone climbed the mountain.

"*Run faster, Melvyn*," Mandy told him. And, for some reason, the voice was also heard in a strange way and as if they were *two intersecting voices*. It was not only her girlish voice, but it was also heard on par with that of a *boy*.

"Was that the... *Mandrew's voice?*" Dixie stuttered.

Diddy pressed a button on the device to stop the video. Then, they both looked at each other maintaining their shocked expressions and tried to reason out what they had just seen and heard.

"Wait, w-wait a minute," Diddy said, trying to recover from the impact. "So..."

"Let's keep watching this recording!" Dixie added, pressing the buttons on the device again.

The video continued to play, where Diddy and Dixie were seen playing with their past group of friends on Hurricane Island. Diddy and Dixie recognized that day, which was one of the many they spent with that group... Everything seemed to point to the idea that Dixie had before entering that room.

(*Hey, these monkeys are funny after all*).

(*Yes... but I don't like them anyways*), was heard in the video.

Diddy and Dixie gasped again... Those two voices that they had just heard in the video, were heard identical to those of *Melenky and Mandrew* respectively... And this time, they were heard only from them.

"No, it can't be..." Diddy said.

Dixie, with all the curiosity alive, pressed one of the buttons of the device, which had a symbol with an arrow to the right, indicating that it served to advance the recording.

(*It's Jenny's turn to be the shark monkey! Run!*), Ricky was seen and heard saying... and also with an *intersected second voice*.

"That's... *Rocky?*" Diddy pointed out, looking at Dixie with the same expression.

"And so, does that mean *Jenny* is..."

Dixie pressed the buttons on the device again. She remembered that day well and tried to adjust to some scene where she would find the "last piece" of the matter.

(I caught you, Dixie! Now you're the shark monkey), Jenny was seen and heard saying, catching Dixie, before running away from her... The second intersecting voice that was heard, was so clear to whom it belonged.

"That's... the *burnt-hairs?*" said Dixie furiously, referring to the very *Jemky*.

Diddy pressed the button again to pause the video, and then removed the cassette from the device to verify it. It said on the front: "Day 49. Another day with those dumb monkeys."

"So... *All this t-time...*" Diddy pronounced, breathing hard and not looking away from the cassette.

"Were we... interacting with those *fool bullies* really?" Dixie continued in the same way and finished processing everything. "So, are they the ones who controlled them?!"

"Let's review another cassette!" Diddy exclaimed, taking another cassette at random. "This one!"

Diddy took a cassette that had a title written: "Day 31. We became friends with those two stupids"; with that, they could confirm the shocking discovery they made. He inserted the cassette into the device, and pressed the button to make it run... The images that were shown through four sub-screens were also of Hurricane Island and the quartet together.

"Let's fast-forward the recording," Diddy said, pressing another button. "With this we'll check it..."

Diddy advanced the video recording until he reached the scene they needed... The images that were shown in fast motion were of the quartet of their so-called friends, apparently taking some ropes and then setting up a net. Later, it was seen how they locked themselves in the latter and manipulated the ropes until they were hung in the air inside that net... Yes, just like the day Diddy and Dixie met them. Later, Diddy and Dixie could be seen "rescuing" them from that alleged kidnapping, and then all running around with the excuse that "a psychopathic gorilla had kidnapped them".

"I think it's here," Diddy said, squinting before releasing the button to stop at the scene they both needed.

The scenes shown were from when Diddy and Dixie introduced themselves to that quartet whom they once considered "friends".

(We didn't do anything to him, I think he's a psychopath... Oh, and by the way, what are your names?), Mandy was heard saying... along with Mandrew's voice.

(My name is Diddy).

(And I'm Dixie. Who are you?), they both were seen and heard talking.

(I'm Mandy. Nice to meet you, Diddy and Dixie), was heard along with Mandrew's voice.

(My name is Ricky), Rocky's voice was heard next.

(I'm Jenny, nice to meet you), was heard along with Jemky's voice.

(And I'm... Uhh... What was my name?)

(Ahh, his name is Melvyn. It's that he's a bit clueless), replied 'Mandy' with small laughs.

(Clueless? What's wrong with you?!), replied 'Melvyn'... along with Melenky's voice.

Diddy stopped the video immediately and then stared at Dixie, who was also completely shocked and now one hundred percent sure of what they discovered. They both turned to look for a while at the static figures of *Jenny, Mandy, Melvyn and Ricky*. They began to think about thousands of things, while remembering *all the* moments they spent with them: all the afternoons of play they spent, the adventures they invented, the nights of long talks and secrets they shared, the construction of that ship, and even the dramas and conflicts they caused to both of them... There were so many things that they didn't know where to start analyzing in depth based on what they discovered at that very moment.

"I... I swore that at least they were robots with autonomy *of their own*," Dixie said, still frozen and watching the four of them. "But... they really... were *those*..."

"When I discovered that they were robots... I also thought the same thing," Diddy added in the same way. "B-but... I still wonder: *how do they operate them? How do they make them work?* I mean, how do they get them to move and speak *so realistically?* Or unless... What if we check more cassettes?!"

"Let's check the first one!" Dixie exclaimed, recovering her senses.

Both quickly searched for the first cassette of all; they felt an enormous latent curiosity and wanted to continue finding out everything at that very moment.

"It's this," Diddy said as he held the cassette and read what it said on the front side.

Diddy inserted the cassette, which only said "Day 1". He turned on the device and, instantly, the video began to be projected through the four sub-screens... They hoped to decipher the suspicious origin of the quartet of their "so-called friends"...

Chapter End Notes

And well...

I have to say that the next chapters: 64, 65 and 66 will be sooo extensive, in fact, 65 is the longest of all, BUT... are about the video recordings that Diddy and Dixie are about to see, so you could imagine what they'll see. To read that, I recommend remembering the scenes when they both were friends with those kids. I tried to do as "summarized" as I could those recordings, but... I didn't get them so summarized, so to speak :c Although anyway, Diddy and Dixie visualize them quickly and can also be read quickly; I would even recommend skipping some scenes, but still details are mentioned that solve certain doubts to Diddy and Dixie.

The format of the dialogues in the recordings is different, but I'll explain it in the final note of the next chapter, so you can go and see it before you continue reading.

Chapter 64: Creepy Answers

Diddy and Dixie were attentive to what they were seeing on that screen, after having inserted that first cassette titled: “Day 1”.

(Ready! They are already on), a deep voice was heard in the video at the moment that the four sub-screens that were displayed. (They're recording, by the way. They'll record absolutely as long as they stay on, can pick up sounds over long distances and can even capture photos. You can even take the tapes out of them and put them on the cassettes).

The video recording showed a closed site that appeared to be from the same building where they were at that very moment. Mandrew, Melenky and Rocky were seen staring at the ‘cameras’. The three of them had shocked expressions and cast curious glances as they approached. Jemky, apparently, wasn't present there.

(Wow... They look... so real), Melenky said as he began to make gestures of greetings and mocking faces at the cameras. (Hey, they even breathe and blink!)

(They seem as if they were really watching us), Mandrew added, doing the same.

(Oh, why do you want us to manage this kind of... robot kids? If that's what we can call them), Rocky commented, pointing to the camera with some disgust. (Why don't you give us the mission to go hunting and kidnapping animals like you? You promised us that you would teach us and-)

(NO!), replicated the deep-voiced ones, who were later seen in the recording and it was nothing more than the group of mandrills and orangutans. (Now you're TOTALLY forbidden to use guns after what happened to Jemky! And it's not the first time you've had accidents because of taking our guns!)

(But this time it was just Jemky!), Rocky replied by trampling. (We already explained to you that he had only gone to annoy that girl he likes and we don't know if she was the one who did that to him!)

(And how is a girl going to be able to do something like that?! He told us that he only shot himself by accident!), replied the leading orangutan. (Jemky ALMOST DIED! And after we had to go to rescue him in the river, we were almost found out by some apes from that DK Island, for a change!)

(Urgh, okay, just teach us how to manage these mechanical kids!), Rocky said reluctantly, rolling his eyes. (And by the way, how is Jemky still going?)

(Much better, in a couple of days he'll walk again), replied the leading orangutan. (He was lucky we had enough of that instant healing elixir; that did him pretty good, otherwise the boy would already be in another world).

(You mean that sky blue liquid that heals wounds in a few minutes?), Melenky asked.

(That same one. It'll leave him even without a scar), replied the orangutan while, along with one of the mandrills, carried in their hands four metal boxes. (Well! Now let's get started).

The group of mandrills and orangutans were seen placing and opening the boxes on the floor, from which they took out sets of elastic bands joined by several wires... which seemed to be quite

particular costumes, they even had a kind of helmet. Then, they also took out some boards, on which they pressed some buttons to expand them further on the floor. The other apes in the group went towards the 'cameras', and began to move them closer, revealing now that they were *Jenny, Mandy, Melvyn and Ricky*, which implied that the four of them had cameras in their eyes.

(Are we supposed to wear those suits of... bad-rolled up mummies?), Rocky pointed out, looking strangely at those objects that the adult apes took out of the boxes.

(That's right. It's not that difficult to operate), replied a mandrill before pointing to the 'cameras'. *(Okay, now choose which of these four ones you want. By the way, you can only choose ONE each and with that you stay)*.

(I'll choose the boy over there!), Rocky exclaimed almost instantly, pointing at 'Ricky'.

(I want the other boy!), Melenky added, pointing to 'Melvyn' in the same way.

(It's not valid, I was going to choose one of the boys!), Mandrew protested by pushing Rocky and Melenky.

(What a pity, you'll be one of the girls!), Melenky told him mockingly.

(Anyway, guys, the other girl will be for Jemky!), a mandrill exclaimed, calming them. *(Now put on your suits!)*

Mandrew, Melenky and Rocky began to put on the 'suits' made of bands and wires, with the help of the mandrills and orangutans. To put them on, each of the elastic bands had to be rolled up in different parts of their bodies such as the extremities, trunk and even fingers and toes. Finally, the helmets that brought those suits were placed on them.

(Now stand on these platforms), said a mandrill, pointing to the boards they had also taken out of the boxes.

The three got on these platforms each, which were large enough for them. Then, the group of adult apes pressed some buttons that were in them.

(Okay, get ready, and then start moving in your own positions, without leaving the platforms).

(This will be like a video game, right?), Melenky asked before starting to move. *(Wow!)*

Suddenly, the 'cameras', or rather, *Melvyn, Ricky and Mandy*, began to move at the same time as Melenky, Rocky and Mandrew. They literally made the same movements as if they were mirrors.

(Wow! This looks so good), Mandrew commented with excitement as he performed movements with each limb, at the same time that 'Mandy' replicated them.

(It's like they're real), Melenky added, doing the same with 'Melvyn'.

(Now walk on your own platforms), the big apes told them.

The three kids began to take a few steps on the platforms, which were similar to those of a treadmill. With that, they made the 'robot' kong children also start walking at the same pace throughout the room, although it was a bit difficult for them to keep them in balance.

(Nice!), Rocky said, trying to control the balance with 'Ricky'. *(Oh, but it's somewhat difficult)*.

Suddenly, Rocky felt a hit from behind and fell to the floor. When he turned to look, he realized that it had been 'Mandy', who had pushed him, while Mandrew laughed out loud.

(Mandrew!), Rocky yelled at him. Then, he proceeded to do the same to Mandrew using 'Ricky', and gave him a push to make him fall and, therefore, 'Mandy'.

(HEY, be careful of them, they could get broken!), the mandrills and orangutans warned them before continuing to instruct them. *(Now try the helmets!)*

Mandrew, Melenky and Rocky adjusted their helmets, which had a type of dark visors that covered their eyes, as well as other wires that ended in small electrodes placed on various areas of their faces. The mandrills and orangutans pressed buttons on the helmets to activate them.

(Hey, I see everything live from here!), said Melenky while he had the visor on and performed movements at the same pace as 'Melvyn' did. This time, 'Melvyn' even replicated the gestures Melenky made with his face.

(Well, now press with your feet the right button of the platforms and speak), the apes told them. *(That will activate the microphones)*.

The three kids proceeded to do the aforementioned and began to talk.

(Hello!), pronounced Mandrew... and this time, the voice of 'Mandy' was also heard at the same time.

(Wow, what was that?), Rocky asked in amazement, at the same time that 'Ricky's' voice also sounded. *(Hey, the boy I'm using also spoke like me)*.

Suddenly, the three began to say more phrases, and this time they were accompanied by the voices of *Ricky, Mandy and Melvyn*. From each one's perspective, they even could now be seen moving and talking as if they were real kong children. Such a fact left Rocky, Mandrew and Melenky astonished, who then began to speak jokes or nonsensical things, and their respective 'robot children', replicated them in real time.

Diddy and Dixie were all gasping with everything they had seen so far in those video recordings, which they could not look away from the screen.

(Rocky is a snowy-mountain-headed), Mandrew said mockingly, while 'Mandy' repeated.

(Worm face, and you haven't seen yourself in a mirror; you clown?!), Rocky replied, along with 'Ricky'.

(Hey, even their voices sound realistic), Melenky said, pointing to the other quartet. *(How did you make them sound like that?)*

(Well, they're the same voices that these children had in life), replied one of the mandrills. *(We kept their voices for this)*.

Immediately, Diddy pressed the button to pause the video recording. He froze for a while, as looking at Dixie, who also got an expression of severe shock upon hearing that... Those last phrases

they heard from the apes left them with icy circulation up to their feet and they felt a whirlwind in their stomachs as their thoughts began to roll.

“No... it can't be true,” Diddy said, looking out into nothingness and trying to process it.

“So... they're...” Dixie stammered, taking a hard breath.

“Dixie... I t-think you weren't wrong with what you said.”

Both turned to look again at the quartet of their ‘so-called friends’... since, apparently, it now made sense why their *realistic characteristics*. Diddy came to his senses and continued to play the video recording along with Dixie. They continued to look at that shocking scene they were seeing.

(Wow), Mandrew said in amazement. (Why don't you teach us how to make one like that?)

(If you behave well and fulfill the mission we have for you, we could consider it), replied one of the orangutans. *(Well, you know what you have to do).*

The group of apes now showed them a medium-sized jar containing a purple-colored liquid substance, as well as rolled-up plans and a small electronic device.

(So, you're going to go to each of these locations), the apes told them, showing them the device, which had a screen. *(They're the residences or places frequented by the children you have to catch; they're all ape children of different species and around your ages. And don't worry, those kids spend away from home frequently and unsupervised, so it won't be difficult).*

(And the moment you manage to catch each one, you'll spray this substance on them. Make sure they breathe it in), added an orangutan, showing them the jar with the purple liquid.

(And once you have them trained, you'll assemble this ship), added one of the mandrills, unfolding and showing them the plan drawn. *(Here are all the instructions, all of them! Even where you can get the materials; on that Hurricane Island there are many remains of shipwrecks. And you can use our tools, by the way).*

(Oh, but a ship is very big), Rocky contradicted. *(Are you sure that with those kids we are going to make it?)*

(Of course you'll be able to), replied the other mandrill showing the purple substance. *(That's what this substance is for: when those brat kids are under their effects, they'll obey everything, absolutely everything you tell them and teach them, you can even invent a story about their lives and they'll believe it).*

(And we can't do that ourselves instead of through these four mechanical kids?), Mandrew suggested, pointing to the other quartet.

(Yes, but we also need these four to have developed their mobility so that they're self-sufficient when we apply the step with the emerald that you brought. These four ones are the most important and the ones that should be with the complete procedure for now).

(And what will you do with all those kids we're going to kidnap?), Melenky asked them.

(Well, the same thing we did with these four ones), replied the mandrill, pointing to the Jenny and company's quartet.

Diddy and Dixie, even after hearing those facts known to them, put their hands to their own faces while keeping their eyes wide open and a horrified expression. Now they no longer had doubts about the quartet of their 'so-called friends'.

(Well, then you explain the instructions to Jemky later), added one of the mandrills. *(We'll go on the mega hunt right now, and we'll return in a couple of months to start with the mechanization of all those kids)*.

(Oh, and aren't you really going to take us with you?), Rocky replied insistently.

(NO!), the apes responded firmly. *(At the place where we take hunted animals, children are NOT allowed; we've already repeated that, and besides... we have some matters to resolve there, and we need that herd of children as soon as possible)*.

(Ah, and another thing), added one of the orangutans before pointing to the other quartet again. *(Be very careful when operating these mechanical kids: don't throw them from great heights or let them get wet or submerge them in water; they can short-circuit or break down)*.

(And right, let's turn off these four), said one of the mandrills, walking toward each of the quartet of... 'robot kids' and, successively, the cameras were turned off... and thus ending the recording.

Both Diddy and Dixie were paralyzed for a few long seconds while they finished processing all that video recording they had just watched. Now several facts began to make sense and fit with the recent events that had happened to them.

"No, no, no, this couldn't have happened," Diddy exclaimed, muttering, his hands to his head. "Did you hear what those crazy apes said?"

"That monstrous group of apes. How could they?" Dixie said about to explode in fury, but then tried to calm down so she could continue. "How about we play more of these video recordings?"

"Let's check the second one... I don't think those four foolish bullies are coming here right now; the door is secured. And I think the blasted apes have gone out for now."

Diddy took another cassette, which only had "Day 2" written on it, and inserted it into the device. He pressed the buttons and, instantly, another video recording began through four sub-screens. The images that were now shown, also seemed to be set in the building, but this time, the exterior of it was seen through only one of the sub-screens; the other three ones were all blank and showed no movement. Mandrew and Melenky also appeared on screen.

(Well, it looks like it's all ready), Mandrew said in the video.

Mandrew and Melenky appeared on the banks of the river outside the building, where a medium-sized boat was parked, on which... *Mandy, Jenny and Melvyn* were; they had been put on the boat, and the three of them looked like mannequins or dolls... despite what they actually were.

(Okay, let's go up and get going), Rocky was heard saying, who didn't appear in the video recording, so it was assumed that he was the one who was controlling 'Ricky' and, through which, the video recording was being filmed at that time.

(Hey, it looks like that same kid would be talking to us), Melenky said before laughing and pointing to Ricky's sub-screen.

Then, Mandrew and Melenky took some boxes, which proceeded to check them and get them on the boat as well.

(Okay, we have nothing left out), Mandrew said while pointing to each of the objects they carried. *(The plans of the ship, that tracking device, the tools, the hypnotizing mixture, the healing mixture, spare screws in case these four break a bone, the disinfectant in case they get dirty, and the brushes in case they get disheveled. Oh, and candies that our dads gave us to catch all those kids. Well, that's all. Let's go!)*

They both got on the boat, followed by 'Ricky'. Apparently, Rocky had stayed in the building while communicating with Mandrew and Melenky through 'Ricky'.

There were no such relevant details in that videorecording; it only showed a long maritime journey that the three had in 'company' of the other quartet of... *mechanical children?* Diddy and Dixie fast forwarded the video recording while watching in fast motion the entire journey made by Mandrew, Melenky and 'Ricky'. Later, they arrived at the very Hurricane Island, in exactly the same place from where they both left with the ship.

(Get them down quickly and make sure no one is in sight!), Rocky whispered through 'Ricky'. *(Help me get this kid down too, by the way).*

Melenky and Mandrew disembarked the quartet of mechanical kids, including 'Ricky', since Rocky seemed to have difficulty mobilizing him. The place where they stopped was quite lonely, so they had no problem with any one seeing them.

They first took 'Jenny', 'Mandy', and 'Melvyn', to hide them in some bushes, although with some difficulty due to their weights. Later, they returned for the extra items they had brought and also hid them. They spent a few minutes settling the mechanical quartet and making sure they couldn't be seen by anyone.

(Now, let's go!), Mandrew said to Melenky before looking everywhere.

And later, Melenky and Mandrew left. They were no longer shown on screen, so they were supposed to have already left Hurricane Island.

Diddy and Dixie decided to skip forward the video recording, since no more movement was visible. They stopped at a scene where two more of the sub-screens lit up; according to the context, they seemed to be from 'Melvyn', and 'Mandy', and, likewise, 'Ricky' also showed movement.

(Well, now that we're running these mechanical kids, let's go for the ones we have to catch), Rocky said.

(Ugh, but it's hard to operate them), Melenky complained as he tried to keep his balance when controlling 'Melvyn'.

(And by the way, what will we do with the other girl?), asked Mandrew pointing to 'Jenny', who was not being controlled by either.

(That's for Jenky. We have to wait for him to finish recovering), Rocky replied. *(Meanwhile, we have to hide her).*

Rocky, Mandrew and Melenky, through their respective 'mechanical kids', hid 'Jenny' in the bushes. Then, they took all the belongings they had taken to that island, and left.

The three kids began to make their 'mechanical kids', walk and, in turn, took out the electronic device where the group of adult mandrills and orangutans had mentioned that they had recorded the locations of different kong children.

(Let's see... Let's go for this one first; it's closer), Rocky said, pointing to the device's screen, through 'Ricky'.

The journey they took had been somewhat extensive, so Diddy and Dixie were accelerating the video recording between times. They stopped at a scene showing a huge tree house, where a small group of kong children were running underneath it.

(And which of those children should we catch here?), Melenky asked in a low voice.

(Are two ones), replied Rocky. *(It's that monkey in the green shirt and that one in the blue jacket)*, he added, through 'Ricky', pointing to a couple of kong boys in those clothes.

(Okay, let's go get them), Mandrew said, making 'Mandy' walk, but Rocky stopped her instantly through 'Ricky'.

(Wait!), Rocky ordered him, whispering. *(We must keep a low profile! The other children must not see us, let alone their relatives or acquaintances!)*

The three waited for an opportune moment to be able to catch the pair of kong children, until later they saw that both had stopped in a corner without being in sight of anyone else.

(Now, let's go, let's go!), Rocky exclaimed before starting to make them run 'Mandy', 'Ricky' and 'Melvyn' towards the two kong children expected. *(Prepare the candies and the hypnotizing mixture!)*

(Uhh... and how do we kidnap children?), Mandrew asked on the way.

(Well... Ugh, we've never done that, just with insects or small animals), Rocky replied before stopping 'Ricky' and thinking. *(Oh, we just offer them the candies or try to become their friends and that's all)*.

Finally, the three mechanical kongs reached the pair of the designated kong children to speak to them, to which they threw strange looks at the three at first, but then smiled at them as if nothing.

To Diddy and Dixie's surprise... they were right about what they supposed: that pair of kong boys who were about to be caught were *one of the few with whom they built that ship...* Yes, from the herd of those who claimed to be 'old friends' of the quartet of *Jenny, Mandy, Melvyn and Ricky*.

(Uhh... Hello!), said those children with kindness towards 'Mandy', 'Ricky' and 'Melvyn' in the video recording. *(Who are you?)*

(Ahh... Uh... Well, I'm... a girl), Mandrew stuttered making 'Mandy' talk at the same time.

(Uh, yeah, but what are your names?), one of the boys asked them again, smiling at them with a look of strangeness.

(Take out the candy, Mandrew), Melenky said, making 'Melvyn' speak loudly by accident.

(Don't call me Mandrew here, you moron!), replied Mandrew, also speaking by accident through 'Mandy'.

(Uhh, excuse me, Mandrew is a girl's name?), one of the kids asked them with light laughs.

(Urgh, just catch them!), Rocky ordered before lunging at the two boys.

The two kong boys got scared by these sudden attitudes, and began to try to flee instantly. Not before Rocky, Melenky and Mandrew, through their respective 'robots' lunged towards that pair of children.

(WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?!), exclaimed the two children as they struggled to get free from the three mechanical kids. *(WHO ARE YOU?!)*

'Ricky', 'Mandy' and 'Melvyn' held their two victims between the three, while pulling them by their clothes or their fur as soon as they took strength to free themselves, even reaching the point of beating them or knocking them to the ground to immobilize them.

(NOW, THE HYPNOTIZING MIXTURE!), Rocky exclaimed as he held one of the children to the ground, who became increasingly frightened and confused.

Melenky, through 'Melvyn', took out and opened the bottle of the purple liquid and, instantly, poured a little close to the noses of both children... After a few seconds, they stopped putting up resistance and calmed down. Rocky and Mandrew stopped holding them and released them, then helped them to stand up without any problem. Suddenly... the pair of kong boys had a fixed and lost gaze, without any emotion, coming to adopt an expression similar to that of the 'Jenny' and company's quartet when they were turned off.

(Are they already... hypnotized?), Melenky asked by beckoning to the two children through 'Melvyn', to which they only followed him with their eyes, but without reacting in any way.

(I guess so), Mandrew replied while, through 'Mandy', he began to tickle the two boys, without receiving a reaction in any way. *(Wow, they don't laugh, so they may be).*

(KENNY! HENRY! COME, WE HAVE TO TELL YOU SOMETHING!), one of the other kong children who were playing in that area was heard saying.

(Run, run! Let's get out of here quickly!), Rocky exclaimed before removing them all from the site to prevent those other kongs from seeing them.

The three of them took the pair of captured children, almost dragging them by the limbs. They hid among all the surrounding vegetation and continued to move away as fast as they could. On the way, the pair of kong children could be seen and heard how they were hurting or scratching themselves due to the abruptness with which the other three ones treated them while dragging them. They stopped in a more hidden place where there could be no presence of anyone else.

(Now what?), Mandrew asked.

(We have to hide them), replied Rocky observing, through the eyes of 'Ricky', everywhere. *(Ugh, I don't know where... What do you think if we set up a small hut and we hide them all there?!)*

(And do you know how to build one?), Mandrew asked mockingly.

(No, but it'll be a quick one, just so that all those kids that we're going to catch aren't going to be seen by anyone), Rocky replied.

(What if they run away?!), Melenky replied.

(That won't happen), Rocky contradicted. (That's why they're sedated with the hypnotizing mixture; with that, they'll do everything we order them, and even as time goes by, they'll talk and act as if they weren't under its effects. According to our dads, the effect lasts two or three months. And when it passes, they'll only go crazy, but they won't regain consciousness... Anyway, let's do that and then we'll go for the next victims).

Diddy and Dixie fast forwarded the video recording again while it was showing how the three bully kids, through their respective mechanical kids, set out to assemble said hut proposed by Rocky. For that, they only used a materiality of branches, trunks and vines that they found in the environment. At the end, they directed the pair of kong children they had captured, into the hut; they even went to take 'Jenny' again and hid her there too. They also hid the remaining tools and objects they had brought. Finally, they collected a lot of leaves and vines to cover the house, so that it would be hidden among nature.

(Ready! Now no one will see them), Rocky said as he shook off Ricky's hands.

(Let's catch the next boy or girl!), Mandrew exclaimed in a tone of excitement. (I feel like this will be fun).

The three kids left the site and took out again the device containing the locations of the various kong children they had to capture.

Diddy and Dixie fast forwarded the video and now saw a scene where the three kids were walking in a different place: they were hidden again behind lush vegetation while visualizing another small group of kong children. This time, they seemed to focus on a monkey girl of golden species, who was playing with three other kong girls.

(Well, it's that little girl over there), Rocky pointed out quietly. (Mandrew! It's your turn to catch her, go get her and then we'll go hypnotize her).

(And why me?!), replied Mandrew.

(Because you're controlling one of the mechanical girls. Girls make friends with other girls more easily. Offer her the candies this time!)

(But I don't even know how girls become friends), replied Mandrew.

(You just talk to them more delicately and offer them the sweets... And look, she's already alone, go!), Rocky said, pushing 'Mandy' as soon as he realized the expected girl was alone.

Mandrew set out to direct 'Mandy', towards the girl who would be the new victim, and yes... that girl was also part of the herd of 'old friends' of Diddy and Dixie's group of so-called friends. That girl was near a tree, which she seemed to want to climb, but not before 'Mandy' arrived and started talking to her.

(Hello!), Mandrew pronounced, making 'Mandy' speak at the same time.

(Huh, hi!), the girl replied, greeting her with a smile.

(Hey, uh... do you want to be my friend?), 'she' asked directly, earning a strange smile from the other girl.

(Oh, well, we could be, but... who are you? What's your name?)

(Well... My name is... M-Mand... Mand...), 'she' stuttered for a few seconds before regaining 'her' posture. *(Ah, I have these candies, don't you want one?!)*, 'she' added by showing her a couple of lollipops.

(Ahh, my favorites!), exclaimed the girl taking one immediately, but in turn, she also looked at 'Mandy' strangely. *(Uhh, and why is this?... By the way, are you called Man-Man?)*

(Ah, yes, yes, yes, that's my name! Now eat that lollipop!), Mandrew responded by removing the wrapping from the girl's lollipop and almost forcing her to taste it.

(Ugh, you are stupid to talk to girls, Mandrew!), Rocky reproached. *(You know what? Just catch her right now!)*

Mandrew, without further thought, lunged at the girl through 'Mandy'. He grabbed her by the hair and held her neck and mouth to stop her from screaming. The victim girl was now quite scared and confused about it and tried to get free from 'Mandy', pulling her hair hard forward.

(URGH, COME AND HELP ME TOO!), Mandrew exclaimed, trying to lift 'Mandy's' head because of the hair pulls that the victim girl was providing.

Rocky and Melenky took 'Ricky' and 'Melvyn' to the scene, and together they held the kong girl. Melenky prepared the bottle of the purple liquid, and instantly poured a little bit close to her nose. Seconds later, the girl stopped resisting and began to adopt an empty expression as well.

(Ready, let's take her!), Rocky ordered. *(And quick! Before those other girls come)*.

Between the three of them they took the kong girl and hid. Then, they released her and gave her orders to walk on her own and follow them... That girl obeyed them as if nothing, as if she no longer had a will of her own.

They came back to the hut they had set up and made the monkey girl enter immediately. They took a look inside the hut and, the other two kong boys they had caught before, were still sitting as if they were statues... They didn't even show any discomfort or desire to want to go out, they were just there, barely blinking every five seconds.

(I told you they wouldn't escape), Rocky said. *(Well, let's go for the next one... And of course, don't forget that we must also feed everyone we capture)*.

Diddy and Dixie skipped forward the video recording again. The next scenes showed almost the same thing: 'Ricky', 'Mandy' and 'Melvyn' being used by their respective controlling kongs to catch more kong children. The bully kids managed to capture three other kong children that day... and they were all known faces to Diddy and Dixie; now they understood where all that herd of children with whom they built this ship really came from.

Later, Diddy and Dixie played the following cassette, which showed how the three bully kids, although with some clumsiness and success at the same time, were capturing more kong children in different places on Hurricane Island. They usually did so in the afternoon when child victims went out to play or walk alone or with other children. After being hypnotized, they were hidden inside the hut and, just like the first day, none of these children dared to get up or leave nor did they show any emotion. On certain occasions, scenes were shown where the three bully kids provided food to the captured ones, and they ate it normally and obeyed everything that was ordered to them. They managed to kidnap three other kong children that day, where at the time of executing the kidnappings, treated them without any consideration and as if they were toys.

Diddy and Dixie played two more cassettes. Obviously, they were skipping forward quickly, since they contained scenes similar to the previous two ones, showing around a dozen kong children kidnapped so far.

They thought to skip cassettes when reviewing the fifth and see that it was almost the same content. But later, they noticed that not only three cameras were reflected in the sub-screens, but now *the four sub-screens did show video*, implying that the fourth missing member was already going to pronounce.

(But why do I have to control a GIRL?!), a fourth voice that was new to those video recordings complained.

(Hey, make her walk well; she looks like a noodle electrocuting), Mandrew said before letting out a laugh.

(Shut up, I found out about all this recently!)

Rocky, Mandrew and Melenky were laughing out loud as they focused the 'camera' on none other than 'Jenny', who was now clearly being controlled by Jemky... too awkwardly. As mentioned, 'Jenny' was staggering around at every moment because Jemky still didn't control her well.

(Hey, but this looks like a realistic video game anyways), Jemky commented with excitement, focusing everywhere as if playing with 'Jenny', but at the same time, he also grumbled. *(Ugh, but why did you leave one of the girls to me?!)*

(Ah, because Rocky and Melenky picked the boys first), replied Mandrew.

(Well, this looks like a game anyways), Jemky said before talking normally again. *(So, what do we have to do? You told me that we have to catch more kong kids and sedate them, right? And then take them all on a ship that we have to build?)*

(That's right), Rocky replied. *(And then our dads will make them robots like the kids we're controlling now).*

(Ugh! But did they go crazy?!), Jemky grumbled again. *(How the heck do they think we're going to do ALL THAT?! I thought that by bringing them that emerald, they would teach us something more interesting like hunting animals just like them).*

(Uh, excuse me for telling you this, Jemky), Rocky said in a serious tone. *(But I remind you that it was because of YOU that we were sent to do this. You are tremendously stubborn; we warn you not to mess with Dixie! That girl got away with it! Maybe she wasn't even going to tell Diddy!)*

(Urgh, don't mention that stupid girl!), Jemky replied furiously. (I swear the next time I see her, I'll tear out all her stupid hair for trying to kill me!)

(For trying to kill you?), Melenky asked in a tone of strangeness. (Hadh't you said that she wanted to go on a romantic date with you in exchange for not telling Diddy anything and that you were going to teach her how to shoot and that she accidentally shot you?)

(Uhh, yes, yes... Of course it was so!), Jemky said as if trying to regain a normal tone of voice. (Of course, she wanted to go on a date with me. She asked me to teach her how to shoot, but she got so excited that she accidentally shot me and I fell into the river... By the way, she also told me that I'm the most handsome orangutan she has ever seen and we kissed about twenty times), he added, trying to sound proud.

"This triple annatto-burnt-faced! That isn't true!" Dixie exclaimed, furious and eager to go out and find Jemky to give him a beating.

(Meh, speak the truth, Jemky, you sound exaggerated), Mandrew replied in the video.

(Yeah, just tell the truth of what happened), Rocky added.

(Ugh, okay, she did shoot me!), Jemky grumbled almost shouting. (While I told her not to tell Diddy anything and proposed a date, that fool girl took the gun from me, and then I took out the other one I carried, but I didn't notice that the one she had was the one that was loaded... And the rest you already know: I fell into the river. Urgh, that stupid! I didn't even plan to hurt her, I just wanted to scare her, but that fool girl did it to me).

(Did you already see? That girl is a danger; why do you think we didn't want to fight with her anymore? We couldn't even do with the monkey anymore), Rocky added before sighing. (Anyway, Jemky, and how are you continuing? Doesn't it hurt you at all from the shot?)

(Not at all. I feel like new), Jemky replied this time speaking calmly. (Wow, that healing elixir of our dads is miraculous, even when we have had fatal accidents).

(Well, it means we're all fine now), Rocky added, sounding more cheerful, before pulling out the tracking device, through 'Ricky.'

The quartet was now complete and they set out to continue their mission. Among some scenes, it was seen how Jemky found it difficult to control 'Jenny', although little by little he was achieving it, unlike the other three kids, who already naturally operated their respective mechanical kong children.

Diddy and Dixie quickly played the following cassettes, where they now heard the four bully kids in action: they had managed to catch up to twenty kong children of different species and, likewise, they all hid them inside the provisional hut they had made. The only thing they didn't change was the way they kidnapped them... In almost every scene, one of the four came out with some awkwardness, even though they achieved their goal anyway.

(LET GO OF ME, WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME?!), a kong boy shouted as he was being forcibly caught by the quartet.

Rocky (RICKY): *(Stay still!), he ordered the kong boy before receiving a blow from him, who even made him blow some screws to 'Ricky'. (LOOK, I DON'T GIVE YOU HARDER JUST*

BECAUSE WE HAVE TO TAKE YOU AWAY ALIVE!), he replied by taking him harder from the shirt he was wearing and trying to spray the hypnotizing liquid.

(LET ME GO I SAID!), replied the child victim, giving him a strong kick directly to the head of 'Melvyn', which even pressed the button of his ear that served to open his head and show his internal mechanism.

The child victim was instantly frightened to see 'Melvyn' that way. He gave another blow to 'Ricky', and a few pushes to 'Jenny', and 'Mandy' and then ran away terrified and screaming for help.

«**Rocky:** *(NOOOO, DON'T LET HIM GO, DARN IT! HE'S GOING TO RAT US OUT!)*, he exclaimed, speaking in internal mode.

«**Melenky:** *(Hey, can you close my head?)*

«**Rocky:** *(Close it yourself! And you, Mandrew and Jemky, go get that fool kid!)*

Jemky and Mandrew continued to make 'Jenny' and 'Mandy' run after that child, while Rocky and Melenky stood for a while to recover 'Ricky' and 'Melvyn' from the blows they received. Even 'Ricky' seemed to have dislocated a knee.

«**Jemky:** *(But come too, why are you stopping?!)*, he replied to Rocky and Melenky while he was making 'Jenny' run along with 'Mandy' after the intended child boy.

«**Melenky:** *(Wait a moment! Don't you see that that stupid kid almost destroyed us?!)*

Rocky and Melenky finished recovering, and then joined the chase through their respective mechanical children, although these were much more behind than Jemky and Mandrew, who had deviated in order to trick the boy and finally catch him.

«**Mandrew:** *(We already caught him, hurry up!)*

'Mandy' and 'Jenny' were holding and wrestling the boy before 'Ricky' and 'Melvyn' arrived and, as soon as they did, they sprayed the hypnotist near his nose. The four took a heavy breath as soon as the kid victim stopped exerting force and stood completely still. Between the four of them they noticed how their respective mechanical kongs were damaged; all were disheveled and with clear characteristics of having come out of a fight.

«**Melenky:** *(Ugh, hey, we're mistreating these mechanical monkeys a lot ; we should act with more caution... Just look at the boy I'm managing; I think he even got a nut unscrewed).*

«**Jemky:** *(It's that you guys are like stupid, do you still think that forcibly catching them is a good strategy?... And besides, the trick of offering them candies sounds more for baby children).*

«**Rocky:** *(And how else are we going to catch them?!)*

«**Jemky:** *(There have to be other ways to do it more easily ...)*

«**Rocky:** *(Well , so, my suggestion is that you and Mandrew better take over catching the rest of the kids; you're girls, you're not mistreated as much as Melenky and me).*

«**Jemky:** *(Excuse me?! This is a mission of the four of us!... Bah, 'because we're girls'. I didn't even want to manage one of the girls!)*, he replied, raising his voice, before pausing. *(Wait a minute!... I got it! Sure, how did we not think of it before... Okay, guys! Mandrew and I will take over the rest).*

«**Mandrew:** *(Excuse me?! And what about Melenky and Rocky?!)*

«**Jemky:** *(Let them stay and take care of those kids we have already caught, while you and I will go for the rest. I came up with a more subtle idea to catch them. By the way... are there many who are boys?)*

«**Rocky:** *(Well... Only eight of the ones left are girls).*

«**Jemky:** *(Oh, why!... Anyway! There we'll also manage to catch them. Well, say the location of the next victim).*

The four set off again and went in search of the next kong child they would be about to kidnap. Upon arriving at the site, this time only Jemky set out to execute the capture, since Rocky and Melenky didn't have 'Ricky' and 'Melvyn' in good condition at that time.

«**Mandrew:** *(Well, what time are we going to get out to catch him?),* he asked as he spotted their next victim behind some branches. *(That monkey looks docile, hopefully he doesn't try to blow our heads like Melenky's mechanical kid).*

«**Jemky:** *(What are you talking about? We're not going to exert any force against that monkey boy. This time I'll do it alone so you can see, and the next time you accompany me, okay?)*

«**Melenky:** *(And what do you plan to do? How are you going to catch him without having to force him?)*

«**Jemky:** *(It's simpler than you think ; you just observe. Pass me the hypnotizing mixture, by the way).*

Jemky, with the hypnotizing mixture in Jenny's hands, directed the latter towards the intended kong child. He made 'Jenny' walk normally, as if she were a real chimpanzee girl. That child boy they wanted to catch was swinging on a swing made of tires. And then, Jemky directed 'Jenny' behind the swing and, trying to act at the right moment, hit the tire and lay on the ground instantly, as if pretending to have got hit.

Jemky (JENNY): *(OUCH!)*, he exclaimed, also making 'Jenny' speak at the same time.

The kong boy, who was a monkey, stopped immediately and turned to look at 'Jenny' who was rubbing her head and making gestures of pain as if she had received a blow. The boy got off and headed quickly to help her.

(Oh no, sorry, I didn't see you, sorry!), the monkey boy exclaimed, helping her to her feet.

Jemky (JENNY): *(Uh, no, don't worry, it's okay)*, 'she' replied, still rubbing her head as she finished getting up.

(Oh, no, no, forgive me seriously, I should have been more careful), the monkey pleaded.

Jemky (JENNY): *(No, no, seriously don't worry, it was an accident...)*, she said to him, subtly adjusting her hair and making direct eye contact with the monkey boy.

(Uhh... By the way, who are you? I don't think I've seen you around here), the boy asked, smiling back kindly.

Jemky (JENNY): *(Well, my name is Jem- Uhh, I mean... you can just tell me Jem! And what's your name?)*

(I'm Andrey, nice to meet you), he said, shaking her hand, before looking as if he'd caught a stare from her. *(Uhh, what's up)*

Jemky (JENNY): *(Oh, I'm sorry, it's that... You really have pretty eyes)*, she said, giving him a little tender laughter that even made the monkey boy smile more.

(R-really? Wow, no girl had ever told me that... I mean, no one has told me that), he replied, showing somewhat nervous, but at the same time, still smiling at her.

Jemky (JENNY): *(In fact... I think you're a cute monkey)*, she said, fiddling with her hair and smiling at him.

(Hey, you must be kidding), he replied, this time starting to blush intensely. *(Thanks anyway... You know?... You also seem very cute to- Huh, I meant-)*

Jemky (JENNY): *(Oh, how adorable you are)*, she said, giving him a little push in a flirtatious way, making the monkey boy smile again.

(Oh, by the way... don't you want to... sit and talk together a little more?), the monkey boy proposed, almost in the same tone.

Jemky (JENNY): *(If you want)*, she replied with a mischievous look as 'she' naturally took out the bottle of the hypnotizing mixture. *(Oh, excuse me, it's that... I brought my favorite perfume, but it got stuck... Would you be so kind as to open it for me?)*

(Ah, no problem, I'll help you), he replied kindly, taking the bottle and proceeding to open it, but in doing so, he changed his face while taking it close to smell and seemed to notice something strange. *(Hey, this smells so-)*

Jemky, without much thought, pushed the bottle against his nose, causing him to breathe it in and start coughing immediately. Upon finishing... the monkey boy froze just like any other of the kong children they had caught.

«**Melenky:** *(B-but... that's all?)*, he stammered, sounding rather confused.

«**Jemky:** *(And yes, I told you it would be simple. This is how you catch someone, newbies! You just have to make them feel good and then trick them and that's all. There was no need for as much fuss as you did. Mandrew! Next time it'll be your turn)*.

«**Mandrew:** *(Hey, but I'm not like you, I can't even talk to a girl with such flirtations, much less to a boy)*.

«**Jemky:** *(Oh, it's not complicated. If they're boys, it'll be so easy to catch them like that; they're dumber... And if it's a girl, we can try to become her friends and that's all)*.

«**Mandrew:** *(Bah, the first day I tried that with a girl, and in the end, we ended up forcibly taking her to get the hypnotizing mixture to her nose)*.

«Jemky: (You just play along with me and that's it! Well... What are we waiting for? Let's hide this monkey boy and go for the next one).

The four, or rather, this time only Jemky and Mandrew were the ones who continued the mission of catching kong children. Jemky, who at first was complicated, was now the one who found it most natural to act as a different identity, since with his gallant attitude, Jenny's aesthetics, and acting like a girl, he managed to quickly catch the kong children without having to exercise any violence. Jemky, through 'Jenny', indirectly flirted with the victim kids, where as a final result, he managed to get them to help her open the bottle of the hypnotizing mixture and then press them against their noses and sedate them. Mandrew, who also participated in the kidnappings, did the same with 'Mandy', although it was a bit complicated, since he didn't have the same gestures as Jemky. Anyway, the latter was sending him a few instructions at the time. When it came to a girl they were going to catch, they simply treated her with intense kindness, flattered her as if she were their lifelong friend, and finally asked her to 'please' open the bottle of the hypnotizing mixture.

As for Rocky and Melenky, they had to make some repairs to 'Ricky' and 'Melvyn', since they had suffered damage at the time of the kidnappings. Finally, they finished fixing them with a sky blued liquid that they called 'healing mixture'. Diddy and Dixie recognized such a chemical... Yes, the same one they had used to heal Dixie's arm the time she was attacked by a carnivorous plant, and surely also to heal Jemky from the shot.

The following videocassettes were about almost the same thing. They became so repetitive that Diddy and Dixie opted to play the first one that already contained letters written on the front face, that one said: "Day 26: We discovered those dumb monkeys". With that title, they knew what it was going to be about, so they played it and fast forwarded the video recording a little.

(I'm hungry... I want food), one of the captured kong children stammered towards 'Ricky'.

Rocky (RICKY): *(But if you already ate today, you wait until tomorrow at noon... Ugh, okay, I'll bring you more).*

«Mandrew: (How can they not be hungry if we barely gave them food yesterday morning and now it's more than mid-afternoon?)

(Friend... Give me... a hug), said a kong girl throwing herself into hugging 'Mandy'.

Mandrew (MANDY): *(I'm not your friend... Oh, well, it's okay), 'she' replied, reluctantly reciprocating the hug.*

Apparently, they had already caught all the kong children they needed... And yes, that was the herd with whom that ship was built; there was no longer any doubt about that. Among other novelties, these children now seemed to begin to have autonomy and perform more actions such as talking, going for a short walk or even trying to become friends with the quartet.

«Jemky : (Anyway ! We have to train them to start that ship building; I don't want to take care of forty dumb kids for so long).

«Mandrew: (But if they're all weak ; I think we should feed them more).

«Rocky: (Well, get more food).

«**Mandrew:** *(Excuse me? You should go to get it. Jemky and I already took over capturing the last kids; it's up to you to make an effort).*

«**Rocky:** *(And do you think it's little that Melenky and I have taken over feeding and watching over all these silly kids?)*

«**Melenky:** *(Anyway ! So, let's go together! Otherwise, we won't advance anything and our dads will drag us when they return).*

The four of them entered all the kidnapped kong children in the hut they had made on the first day, which was now almost completely filled, since there were forty children they had prisoners.

Rocky (RICKY): *(KEEP QUIET, STAY HERE AND NOBODY GO OUT!)*, he ordered the herd of kids as if he were running a classroom, and they listened to him without problems.

The quartet of bully kids directed the quartet of mechanical kids in search of food for the kidnapped ones. They carried large baskets and carts to gather fruits they needed to feed the herd.

In spite of everything, the four could be heard quite tired and fatigued from the whole mission, and they still had the ship building pending to be able to transport the whole herd. Future days looked to be monotonous and boring for the four of them.

«**Melenky:** *(I want to go home),* he complained as he made 'Melvyn' to climb up a tree and reached for fruit.

«**Mandrew:** *(But we're at home ; we're just controlling four robotic sillies).*

«**Melenky:** *(I was referring to Island Z, our house, and I miss going out to get jewelry and exchange it for those lollipops with millipede venom. This is the worst vacation; we better not have given that emerald to our dads. I want those millipede sweets!)*

«**Jemky:** *(It would have been great if they finally let us use guns; it would have been the best vacation of all and we would be eating those millipede lollipops in droves).*

«**Rocky:** *(Oh, you better don't talk, Jemky, because you were after Dixie you got hurt and that's why our dads didn't let us go out with them to hunt animals!)*

«**Melenky:** *(I see it and I can't believe it... I see it and I can't believe it!)*, he exclaimed suddenly.

«**Rocky:** *(Huh? What's wrong with you?),* he asked strangely.

«**Melenky:** *(Y-you have to see this! Look into my camera or go up where I am AND SEE!)*

Diddy and Dixie, although they were already waiting for that moment, stared at Melvyn's sub-screen, since it was visualizing nothing more and nothing less than the silhouettes of the *two of them* in the distance.

In the video recording, the other three mechanical children climbed the tree to where 'Melvyn' was, and focused on where he looked.

«**Rocky:** *(SAY WHAT...?!)*

«**Mandrew:** *(Nooo, it can't be true! B-but... HOW?!)*

«**Jemky:** (No... I CAN'T BELIEVE WHAT I'M SEEING... CONFIRM IF YOU GUYS ALSO SEE... those ...)

«**Rocky:** (YES, THEY'RE THE SAME! But where the heck did that pair come from?!)

The four sub-screens showed the same Diddy and Dixie in the distance: both were running and playing among the trees and vines, where they were quite cheerful and full of energy.

«**Melenky:** (No, no, no, no! This has to be a mirage or maybe the cameras have broken down!)

«**Mandrew:** (NO! It's nothing like that ; I'm seeing the same thing too!)

«**Rocky:** (L-let's get a closer look, this has to be a joke!)

The quartet, after giving more murmurs, went to a place that was closer to spy on the couple of kongs. They hid behind the vegetation, trying to make as little noise as possible, so that they could observe them closer.

«**Mandrew:** (No, it's not possible . It's them!... But how?! I mean, how did they get here?! It's impossible that in this season they have been able to come from DK Island to here; this island is millions of kilometers away from DK Island, I have no idea how much it's, but it's too far... And there are even hurricanes to top it off!)

«**Melenky:** (It's crazy! This has to remain a joke, how come those two are here?!)

«**Jemky:** (No, no, I need to process all this ...)

«**Rocky:** (Maybe they came to spend the vacation here or maybe they're lost).

«**Melenky:** (Well, the truth... For being lost they look very cheerful... And wait! They look... very affectionate too).

Diddy and Dixie, within the video recording, were taking a break while they were leaning on each other together and at the same time laughing playfully when they looked at each other. Between times, both hugged or looked at each other very closely and made some gesture of affection towards the other. Later, they even kissed, which made the whole quartet give a small scream of impression.

«**Rocky:** (WHAT?! Did they... just kiss each other's mouths?! I mean...)

«**Melenky:** (ARE THEY DATING?!)

«**Jemky:** (No, it can't be true... It h-has to be a joke! That's NOT REAL!)

«**Melenky:** (But at what moment did it happen?!)

The video recording continued to show Diddy and Dixie together, giving each other some gesture of affection that betrayed at first glance that they were a couple in love.

«**Jemky:** (NOO! How is this possible?! Tell me this is not true!), he exclaimed, beginning to get angry. (How come those two JUST KISSED ON THEIR SNOUTS?!)

«**Mandrew:** (And look, they do it ... again).

Diddy and Dixie continued to kiss each other over and over again, while smiling excitedly at each other after doing so. That left more impact on the quartet, who didn't stop focusing on those love scenes... Scenes which generated some embarrassment to the current Diddy and Dixie, who covered their faces with one hand while looking at themselves that way in the video.

«Rocky: *(And at what point did that pair of dwarf wimps come together like that?!)*

«Melenky: *(Well, I have no idea. I swore they would be fighting after the pyramid and Jemky matter).*

«Jemky: *(Urgh, but how?! HOW?! How did THOSE TWO FOOLS pair up?! How did that stupid monkey get it?! That monkey didn't do anything! HE DIDN'T DO ANYTHING TO GET DIXIE!)*

«Mandrew: *(Hey, calm down, Jemky, maybe they're not a couple, what if they're really just that kind of friends who kiss and that's it?)*

«Jemky: *(It's obvious that they're dating, those two liked each other... AHHH, I don't understand what that dumb chimp sees in that idiot monkey! I HATE THEM!... I think I'll go after them! At this very moment I'm going for them! THOSE I DO CATCH WITH BLOWS!)*

Jemky, reacting impulsively, seemed to be about to rush 'Jenny' out to the two of them, but Rocky managed to stop her.

«Rocky: *(Hey, wait! Did you go crazy?! We cannot rat ourselves out, MUCH LESS TO THEM!)*

«Melenky: *(Hey, but seriously, we can catch the two of them and take them to our dads. Where is the hypnotizing mixture?!)*

«Rocky: *(That already ran out).*

«Melenky: *(How did it run out?!)*

«Mandrew: *(Yes, because YOU made it spill several times in the kidnappings, Melenky!)*

«Rocky: *(Urgh, let's not fight anymore! Rather, we must think about what to do. We first have to figure out where those dumb monkeys came from, how about they are planning something?!)*

«Mandrew: *(I think we should kidnap them and take them to our dads like the other children... Oh, darn, but we no longer have hypnotizing mixture!)*

«Jemky: *(Well, I propose to kidnap them just by force; there we'll tie them well so that they do not escape... Urgh, how I hate them, blasted dwarves!)*

«Rocky: *(No! Those two will fight back if we kidnap them by force, and we can't mistreat these mechanical monkeys we are using anymore... Oh, darn it, who am I kidding, I also want to kidnap them anyway, but we can't! Our dads even didn't leave us their guns to go catch them ourselves).*

«Mandrew: *(But seriously, we have to catch them no matter what, we'll get even with them once for all, and we have to take them alive for the experiment of our dads... Ugh, but how would we do it? We even have to build that ship; we have no more hypnotizing mixture and we can't mistreat these robot monkeys...)*

(Hey, Dixie, I know I've already told you this, but... I'm really so happy for the two of us), Diddy was heard saying in the video recording.

(And I'm much more so, Diddy), Dixie replied, holding his hands. (You don't know how much I've wanted to be like this with you, I wish this was forever).

(Of course we can make it last forever, without anything interfering with us), he replied, holding her hands more and smiling at her as if nothing else mattered at that moment.

(Oh, how cute you are, Diddy), Dixie said before giving him a kiss on the cheek and with the same emotion.

Those scenes generated some tension in the current Diddy and Dixie, who only looked at each other sideways and, at the same time, tried to avoid eye contact while watching the video recording.

«**Rocky:** *(Oh, no, how ugly, that's how we are when we're in love?)*, he commented in a mocking tone.

«**Mandrew:** *(They make me laugh, those two look ridiculous).*

«**Jemky:** *(‘How cute you are, Diddy’), he said, imitating Dixie's voice. (But what does she see as cute at THAT GECKO MONKEY?!)*

«**Melenky:** *(Hey... what if we go talk to them and try to become their friends through these mechanical monkeys?)*

«**Mandrew:** *(Are you crazy? It is too risky if we don't have the hypnotizing mixture; we should not show even the slightest suspicion).*

«**Rocky:** *(Wait! I think what Melenky says is not a bad idea; I was also thinking... in becoming their friends... Yes! We could trick them in some way to catch them without problems. But yes, we must be very careful that they don't discover that it's us and that these monkeys we are using are mechanical kids... Oh, and see a way that they also don't discover that the other children we catch are under the influence of the hypnotizing mixture).*

«**Melenky:** *(We can train them and put the idea that they are both our friends and that they shouldn't rat us out at all, that's possible; with that hypnotizing mixture they obey everything we tell them. And we have to get information out about that pair of dumb monkeys to see how they got here and all that. But for that we must make them want to be our friends).*

«**Mandrew:** *(Jemky is good at that. Hey, Jemky, you who managed to sweeten the kids we caught, do you have any ideas to make those two fools become our friends with ease?)*

«**Jemky:** *(No way! With those two I don't think I can resist giving them the beating of their lives), he replied as if muttering and with a grudge.*

«**Rocky:** *(Hey, calm down, bro, Dixie's not the only girl in the world... And besides, you usually like many girls. And it was obvious that she had fallen for that stupid monkey; just remember how she reacted the time we showed her the notebook of that monkey with that little heart that he drew for her, and she didn't even want to believe us... It's not our fault that she likes monkeys that do nothing to win her and-)*

«**Jemky:** (Urgh! Stop saying it, please, that last thing is what boils my blood the most!... And okay, let's become friends of those dwarves, what can we do... Look, the trick is just to make them feel good: they're both good little kids, we could ask them for some favor or some help and make them believe they've done us good. After that, we'll talk to them more and more, and so they'll agree to be our friends easily.)

«**Mandrew:** (And what kind of help could we ask of them?)

«**Jemky:** (Hmm... How about putting ourselves in some dangerous situation? Let them come to help us and we 'll pretend to be little children who suffer and are abandoned or something like that, so that they will pity us).

«**Rocky:** (Sounds good... How about faking a kidnapping?!)

«**Jemky:** (Exactly! But I think we must first follow the steps of those two well; we must see what places they frequent to find them in the coming days).

“These lizard faces!” Diddy exclaimed indignantly as he continued to watch the video recording.

They both wanted to continue watching that video, but they also wanted to skip forward specifically to the part where they began to interact with them... and that was the cassette that was written: “Day 31. We became friends with those two stupids”...

A/N: This is the format that was used to represent dialogues in the video recordings since the middle of this chapter:

***This:**

Name (NAME): (Dialogue), dialogue tag

It's when the bully kids talk through mechanical kids.

***This:**

«**Name:** (Dialogue), dialogue tag

It's when the bully kids talk internally to each other, that is, without being heard outside, as if they had a microphone deactivated.

***This:**

(Dialogue), dialogue tag

It's when other characters speak within the video recording.

***And this:**

“Dialogue,” dialogue tag

Well, it's the normal dialogue that Diddy and Dixie have while watching those recordings.

***This symbol:**

>>>

It's when they fast forward the recording or change the cassette.

Chapter 65: A Falsehood

Chapter Notes

This chapter is the longest of all (if you're here for spoilers, get out of here as soon as possible).

Diddy and Dixie, after having inserted that cassette, fast forwarded the video recording to a few minutes before the quartet met the two of them for the first time. In that scene, the quartet was finishing tying several ropes until they formed a net, which they were tying to the branches of nearby trees and to some stakes in the ground.

«**Mandrew:** *(And are you sure that pair will be here today?)*, he asked as he finished tying a rope to a stake.

«**Rocky:** *(They have been passing through this area for two days, we just have to shout as loud as we can so they can locate us. And don't worry, these ropes are sturdy).*

«**Jemky:** *(Well, you know, we'll tell them to untie this rope here, so we'll go down slowly so as not to crash or destroy these mechanical monkeys)*, he added as he tied another rope on the opposite side. *(By the way, if we're going to talk to those two, let's make up new names for us this time).*

«**Mandrew:** *(And what name am I going to make up?)*

«**Jemky:** *(And I don't know, make up a girl's name and that's it... Anyway, and don't forget to also act like lost and abandoned children).*

«**Melenky:** *(Here they come! Let's get into the net now!)*

«**Jemky:** *(So fast?! Ugh, come on, come on!)*

The four of them hurried to get inside the net. Two of them took a pair of ropes that were tied to the stakes in the ground and were pulling them little by little, at the same time they got up in the net until they were suspended in the air.

«**Rocky:** *(They're already nearby! Well, on the count of three, start yelling, and beware you laugh when we talk to them or you say something confidential about this).*

“Urgh, if I had known, I would have just left them trapped in that net!” Dixie grumbled as she watched the video recording.

Diddy and Dixie, within the video recording, were visualized running as if they were competing in a race. It was then that the quartet began to scream ‘asking for help’ and struggle with their limbs to ‘try to get out’, to which the kong couple began to hear them, look for them and then arrived to their ‘rescue’.

«**Jemky:** *(They're there, they're there! They already saw us, CALL THEM!)*

Melenky (MELVYN): *(Look, some monkeys! This way! Help us, please!)*, he exclaimed through 'Melvyn', pretending to have just seen Diddy and Dixie.

(Don't worry, we'll help you!) Dixie exclaimed in the recording, trying to calm them down.

(How do we get them all out?!) Diddy asked.

Rocky (RICKY): *(Untie that rope from there!)*, he indicated to them, pointing to the stakes in the ground. *(The one on the right!)*

«**Jemky:** *(W-what?! HEY, NO, ROCKY, IT'S THE OTHER ONE, THE LEFT!)*

Rocky (RICKY): *(NO, NO, IT WAS THE LEFT- AAAAHHHH!)*

Diddy and Dixie had already untied the rope, causing the net to fall hard to the ground along with the children inside. In the video recording, a couple of cracks could be heard.

«**Jemky:** *(Urgh, I told you that wasn't the rope! We're already crashed!)*

(Oh, no! We're sorry, are you okay?), said Dixie with concern as she took each of their hands to help them out.

Rocky (RICKY): *(Don't worry... We're fine)*, he replied pretending to be agitated after having completely got out.

«**Jemky:** *(Now! Apply the 'kidnapper ape story'!)*

Jemky (JENNY): *(We can't stay here! Let's go away!)*, 'she' exclaimed before running off with the group, giving Diddy and Dixie little pushes to make them run too.

(What's going on?!) Diddy asked them as he ran with them.

Melenky (MELVYN): *(There's a kidnapper gorilla on the loose around here! He had caught us in that net!)*

The quartet was running in a random direction while Diddy and Dixie followed them. It was at that moment where 'Mandy' fell to the ground and 'got hurt' her leg.

«**Mandrew:** *(Oh, no! Oh, no, darn it! This girl broke her leg! What do we do?)*

«**Jemky:** *(I told you so clearly that it was the LEFT rope that they had to untie!)*

(Oh, no! Did you get hurt?), Diddy asked 'Mandy' worriedly, helping her to her feet.

Mandrew (MANDY): *(No, don't worry, I'm fine)*, 'she' replied, finishing getting up and then pretending to feel pain. *(Ugh! My leg!)*

Jemky (JENNY): *(Oh, no! You hurt your leg, Mandy!)*, she exclaimed, going to 'help' her.

«**Mandrew:** *(Hey, I wasn't going to call myself that!)*

(Oh, no, she must have gotten hurt with the fall), Dixie said worriedly. *(We are truly sorry!)*

Mandrew (MANDY): *(No, don't worry, I'm used to it).* she replied, rubbing her leg and pretending to walk with difficulty. *(By the way, thank you, for saving us! That very ugly and evil ape wanted to kidnap us and locked us in that net).*

Melenky (MELVYN): *(Yes, be careful when walking in that area. That ape wanted to kill us!)*, he added, pretending a frightened expression.

(Really?!), Dixie asked, looking shocked. *(But what kind of ape was that?)*

Jemky (JENNY): *(We don't know, he's crazy)*, she replied to Diddy and Dixie before smiling at them. *(But... I think that thanks to you we are safe).*

Rocky (RICKY): *(Yes, we didn't know how to get out of that net)*, he added in the same way. *(Seriously, thanks to you guys who showed up just in time).*

(Oh, it's nothing), Dixie replied, smiling at them. *(How good that you have come out well).*

(It's nothing), Diddy added in the same tone. *(And why did that ape kidnap you?)*

Mandrew (MANDY): *(We didn't do anything to him, I think he's a psychopath... Oh, and by the way, what are your names?)*

(My name is Diddy).

(And I'm Dixie. Who are you?)

«**Jemky:** *(Now, the names!)*

Mandrew (MANDY): *(I'm Mandy. Nice to meet you, Diddy and Dixie).*

Rocky (RICKY): *(My name is Ricky).*

Jemky (JENNY): *(I'm Jenny, nice to meet you).*

Melenky (MELVYN): *(And I'm... Uhh... What was my name?)*

«**Rocky:** *(Melenky!)*

«**Jemky:** *(Don't mess it up!)*

Mandrew (MANDY): *(Ahh, his name is Melvyn. It's that he's a bit clueless)*, she replied with a little laugh.

Melenky (MELVYN): *(Clueless? What's wrong with you?!)*

Jemky (JENNY): *(Oh, please, let's not start fighting,*” she added, calming them down before heading back to Diddy and Dixie. *(Oh, excuse me, monkeys. And where are you from? Do you live around here?)*

(Well, not exactly. We are only here on this island; refugees, so to speak), Dixie replied.

(We live on another island far from here), Diddy added. *(Do you live on this island?)*

Rocky (RICKY): *(No... Or well, yes, but it's that...)*

«**Rocky**: *(How do we tell them?!)*

Mandrew (MANDY): *(We don't have a home... Well, we spend every day looking for where to sleep, we have no fixed place to live).*

(Really? And... don't you live with your families or anyone?), Diddy asked them in confusion.

Jemky (JENNY): *(We don't have any family, it's just the four of us).*

(What? So, you hang around alone?), Dixie asked them, astonished.

Jemky (JENNY): *(Yes, we have always been like this).*

Rocky (RICKY): *(By the way, do you know any place for us to stay? It doesn't matter if it's temporary; we were looking for a space for ourselves these days).*

"Urgh, those worm-heads took us for a fool!" Dixie exclaimed, very furious, slamming her hands on the sideboard while she watched the scene.

"So, we were literally talking to them all the time!" Diddy added in the same way.

>>>

They fast forwarded the scene a little further, specifically when they were helping them set up the house.

Rocky (RICKY): *(You two are great!)*, he told Diddy and Dixie. *(You helped us a lot. Thank you, monkeys).*

(It's nothing), Diddy told them kindly, *(Don't you need something? Maybe food).*

Melenky (MELVYN): *(Oh, no, don't worry. We can take care of that. You have already done a lot for us. Thank you!)*

(Oh, okay), Dixie replied, smiling at them. *(It was a pleasure to have helped you).*

Jemky (JENNY): *(Hey, you guys look fun. Do you want to be our new friends?)*, she proposed smiling at them.

(Oh... Sure, why not?), Dixie replied in the same tone.

(Wow, we haven't had friends like us here), Diddy added. *(Okay, we can be).*

>>>

Jemky (JENNY): *(And where are you living for the moment?)*, she asked them later.

(It's kind of funny), Dixie answered. *(But coincidentally we found on this island a teacher from the school where we went. He let us stay in his house until we could return).*

(Mr. Pinky?!), the four of them exclaimed, truly surprised.

(Yes, the same. Uhh... do you know him?), Diddy asked, confused.

«**Rocky:** *(Oh, we shouldn't have said that, darn it! Say something!)*

Jemky (JENNY): *(Of course. He was also our teacher when we went to school).*

(Really?! What a coincidence), Dixie exclaimed, looking surprised along with Diddy. (Do you go to school too?)

«**Rocky:** *(Not like that!... Ugh, just say yes).*

Mandrew (MANDY): *(Yes, for a year we went. But school bored us and so we withdrew).*

Rocky (RICKY): *(By the way, did you go to school on your island? How was your classroom?)*

(Bah! It was bad), Dixie replied. (Almost all of our classmates were conceited, enlarged or unfriendly).

(And not to mention a group of four evil fools who always liked to bother us), Diddy added. (They were vandals).

Jemky/Mandrew (JENNY/MANDY): *(But were they cutes?)* they asked between small laughs.

(Oh, of course not), Dixie replied. (One was a mocking mandrill with dusty, disheveled hairs. Another was a langur with red legs and gossip).

(Another was a monkey with a fluffy face and coffee hairs), Diddy continued. (Oh, and the most hateful was an orangutan with burnt-annatto hair. And no, we don't say it because they are, but because they were annoying and malevolent cretins who made fun of us).

«**Jemky:** *(But look at this pair of stupid monkeys!)*, he exclaimed furiously along with the other three kids.

«**Mandrew:** *(And what do they think?! They are a couple of dwarfs and useless idiots).*

(Can you believe that those stupid kids carried guns?), added Dixie. *(They were thugs!)*

Rocky (RICKY): *(Guns?!),* he asked, pretending to be shocked. *(And... where did those kids get some of them?)*

«**Jemky:** *(Ahh, thanks for reminding us!)*, said in a sarcastic tone. *(Stupid monkey that threw them into the sea!)*

>>>

Mandrew (MANDY): *(Do you have to leave now?),* she asked them along with the others, pretending sad expressions.

(Yes, but we can come tomorrow if you want), Dixie suggested, smiling at them. *(What do you say?)*

Rocky (RICKY): *(Of course. You just call us).*

(Well, we'll see what time we can come), Dixie added. *(It's that right now... we had a pending date).*

Jemky (JENNY): *(Are you two dating?),* she asked them, seeming curious.

(Well... yes), Diddy replied, emitting small laughs along with Dixie. (Yes, we are).

(Really?!), the four exclaimed, pretending not to know.

Rocky (RICKY): *(Wow, I see you're lucky, huh?)*

Mandrew (MANDY): *(Oh, how beautiful!), she exclaimed, simulating a tone of sweetness. (And since when have you been dating?)*

(Not long ago), Diddy replied, before leaving along with Dixie. (Well, we'll see you tomorrow. See you later).

The four of them finished 'kindly' saying goodbye to Diddy and Dixie until they both left and were out of sight later. Then, the four of them remained silent for a while as if analyzing everything that had been spoken with the two of them.

«**Jemky:** *(Blasted, I hate them, so it's true!)*, he grumbled, expressing all the fury he had. *(They really are dating! Ahhh, I hope they only last a couple of months and they finish and die! I HATE THEM!)*

«**Mandrew:** *(But how did they pair up?! Weren't they fighting until the last day of school?)*

«**Jemky:** *(When I proposed that deal to Dixie, it even was because I knew that causing jealous wasn't going to work on that monkey! It was precisely so that those two stupids would fight and never love each other, BUT THEY ENDED UP BEING TOGETHER!)*

«**Rocky:** *(Well, if we want to know more, we'll have to establish a better friendship with that pair. By the way... how come they helped a herd of zoo animals escape? It sounds like a movie for that pair of dwarfs).*

«**Melenky:** *(I swear that I almost burst out laughing when they told it, I didn't expect that all of that would be the reason why they're here. And how did that monkey get kidnapped by some circus trainers?... And Mr. Pinky lives here too?! It's that true? How is it possible?)*

«**Mandrew:** *(Ahhh! I need to know the whole gossip, I'm curious. They'll be back here tomorrow, right?)*

«**Rocky:** *(Let's hope so. And we'll also have to come to this house to pretend that we're staying here... Hey, haven't you stopped to think that the fake names we make up for us sound similar to ours?)*

«**Jemky:** *(Whatever! We already told them those silly kid names, that's how they're going to call us. They won't know it's us, anyways; our island is also thousands of kilometers from here).*

«**Mandrew:** *(Well, why don't we now go fix the leg of this girl I'm using? I think it got unscrewed... and I hope those two monkeys didn't notice).*

"Let's play some scenes where we spent time with them!" exclaimed Dixie, fast-forwarding the video recording, and then playing more cassettes.

In the next videocassette, the quartet was shown on another day watching over the entire herd of kong children that they had kidnapped; the latter seemed to have more and more autonomy and

were already carrying out actions on their own, and were even beginning to speak more fluently, but even so, they continued to obey the orders that the quartet gave them.

Diddy and Dixie fast forwarded the recording until the afternoon hours, since that was where they both found them again, in addition to being the first time they went out to play with them.

«**Rocky:** *(There are the monkeys, they did come! Let's go!)*, he exclaimed as they watched behind some trees for Diddy and Dixie to arrive, and they got out to see them immediately.

Jemky (JENNY): *(Diddy! Dixie!)*

(Hi! How are you? We were looking for you), Dixie told them.

(Yeah, we had come in the morning but we didn't find you here), Diddy added. *(I thought something had happened to you)*.

Jemky (JENNY): *(Oh, no, nothing happened. We had gone to look for food and just arrived)*.

Rocky (RICKY): *(And besides... we went to heal Mandy's leg)*, he added pointing to 'Mandy'. *(She's already better and can walk well)*.

(Really? Did she recover so quickly from an... injury?), Diddy said looking at her strangely.

Melenky (MELVYN): *(Yeah, it's that... Well, it wasn't so serious after all. We found a medicine ape who was able to help us heal her injury)*.

«**Jemky:** *(What the heck?! Melenky!)*

«**Rocky:** *(What is that foolishness you just said, Melenky?!)*

«**Mandrew:** *(And you too, Rocky! Why do you mention this girl's leg?!)*

(Wow, and how did he make her recover quickly?), Dixie asked, pointing at 'Mandy's' leg.

Mandrew (MANDY): *(Well... is that he told me to immerse myself in a spring with medicinal waters and we saw it worked a lot; I already feel the best)*, 'she' hastened to say as an excuse.

>>>

(Come, let's go up to the vines. You're going to like this), Diddy told them as he brought a couple of thick vines. That was the scene where they went down that cliff.

Melenky (MELVYN): *(Will we go down there in... those vines?)*, he asked with some trepidation, to which Diddy and Dixie nodded.

«**Rocky:** *(Those two went crazy! We're going to fall into the water and goodbye to everything!)*

«**Mandrew:** *(They're crazy if they think we're going to go down like that and tear ourselves apart!)*

Mandrew (MANDY): *(But... what if we fall?)*

(Don't worry, we've come down here a bunch of times), Dixie stated as she took the girls' arms and, likewise, Diddy took the boys.

(Besides, if we fall it'll be into the water), Diddy added.

«Rocky: *(To top it off. SAY NO!)*

«Jemky: *(No, say yes to everything, otherwise they'll get bored of us and we'll lose them!)*

«Mandrew: *(BUT THE WATER! We can't let these mechanical monkeys get wet or they'll get electrocuted!)*

«Jemky: *(Just hold on tight, don't be a killjoy! Just pretend you're having fun).*

Diddy and Dixie, in the video, held from a vine, while the four of them held on to them to descend the entire cliff, at the same time they screamed and could be heard quite tense. And this time they weren't pretending, they seemed to really fear for the safety of their mechanical children and they were shouting so seriously that, luckily for them, no insults towards Diddy and Dixie escaped.

«Mandrew: *(THESE MONKEYS ARE GOING TO DISMANTLE US!)*, he exclaimed in a panicked manner as they descended.

(Hold on! We're going to land!), Dixie exclaimed.

>>>

(Well, how about we get in the water now?), Dixie suggested to them as she walked with Diddy towards the lake later.

(Uhh, no, no, no!), the four exclaimed hastily.

(Huh? Why not?), Diddy asked, still smiling at them.

«Rocky: *(SAY NO! NOW TELL THEM NO!)*

Mandrew (MANDY): *(It's that... Well... we don't know how to swim),* she replied slowly. *(Why don't we go somewhere else?)*

(Really? Oh, don't worry, we won't swim in the deep areas and we'll save you if something happens to you), Dixie told them kindly.

«Mandrew: *(Ugh, how insistent!)*

«Melenky: *(Uh, hey... and it looks like it's going to rain in that place).*

(Look, it's starting to rain!), Diddy exclaimed, jumping with excitement. *(We can bathe and jump in puddles).*

(Oh, no! WATER!), the four shouted desperately as they began to run in an aimless direction.

«Jemky: *(NOW, RUN! RUN!)*

The quartet ran to stand under a tree to take cover from the rain.

«Mandrew: *(And act scared!)*

(Hey, what's wrong with you? Are you... afraid of the rain?), Diddy asked them, still looking at them strangely.

Jemky (JENNY): *(Oh... we'll tell you the truth: we don't like water, and we don't want to get wet).*

(What?!... But why? Who doesn't love water!), Dixie expressed, surprised.

Melenky (MELVYN): *(It's t-that you wouldn't understand... How do we explain this to you?... Allergies! We suffer from water allergies).*

«**Jemky:** *(Melenky!)*

«**Mandrew:** *(You always come up with some foolishness!)*

(What?! Really? The four of you?), Diddy asked them. (And... so, how do you bathe?)

Mandrew (MANDY): *(Well... with special waters).*

(Wait a minute, and hadn't you said that Mandy healed her injury in medicinal waters?), Dixie asked.

«**Jemky:** *(Oh, don't make us look bad! Say something!)*

Rocky (RICKY): *(Yes, with that same kind of water we bathe and we also drink it when we get thirsty. The medicine ape we mentioned has helped us a lot with our allergies).*

(Wow, I've never heard about water allergies), Diddy said, looking surprised. (It must be uncommon. Have you always had them or what?)

Jemky (JENNY): *(Yes, and it has been hard to deal with. We've hardly ever been able to enjoy the beach or the lakes. And not to mention when we have to cross from island to island by sea, it's terrible!)*

>>>

(Hey... can I ask you something?), Dixie told them. (Have you... really always been alone? Haven't you had a fixed home?)

«**Jemky:** *(It's now, show up ourselves like abandoned children and tell the story we made up!)*

Jemky (JENNY): *(Well... yes, the four of us have always been alone. You see, we... were abandoned by our parents when we were toddlers).*

(What?!), Diddy and Dixie exclaimed successively. (So... from a very young age?)

Rocky (RICKY): *(Yes, it was a time when there was a massive abandonment of children, not only us, but many other ape children were abandoned in the middle of an island and left alone. We don't remember much about our parents).*

Melenky (MELVYN): *(It was hard to survive among us, but we had to get used to it. And not to mention that the other children treated us the worst, they always did us evil and told us that we were weirdos... They also made fun of our allergies!)*

(Oh, no, how cruel those children were), Dixie exclaimed.

(But so... no one else has taken care of you?), Diddy asked them.

Mandrew (MANDY): *(Just some gorilla ones, but they also abandoned us. The four of us have been best friends all our lives, and we were tired of living with those other stupid kids and that's why we decided to make our own lives and left that island. Sometimes we have met them again, but we just greet them; we don't get along with them).*

Rocky (RICKY): *(And from there, we have gone from island to island moving).*

Jemky (JENNY): *(But even so, we haven't been able to find a good home where we can live peacefully... Not to mention that many animals we've met have treated us like trash).*

«**Jemky:** *(I hope all that sounded believable).*

«**Mandrew:** *(It seems so, they look pitied... By the way, Melenky, I think your idea about allergies wasn't bad).*

>>>

Diddy and Dixie fast forwarded the video recording, where they were now seen near the river with the waterfalls.

Jemky (JENNY): *(By the way, what was the name of your island?),* she asked them as they walked.

(DK Island), Diddy and Dixie replied.

(DK Island?!), the four of them exclaimed as if they were pretending to be shocked.

(What?... Do you know it?!), Diddy and Dixie asked, shocked at their reaction.

Jemky (JENNY): *(Of course).*

(Really?!), the two exclaimed excitedly.

Melenky (MELVYN): *(Uh, do we know that island?),* he asked, confused.

Mandrew (MANDY): *(Yes, Melvyn, do you remember that gorilla's head shaped island? You are a forgetful clueless).*

Melenky (MELVYN): *(I'm not clueless!)*

«**Mandrew:** *(You have to say yes, Melenky, it's part of the plan!)*

«**Melenky:** *(And what time are we going to tell them about the ship and all that?)*

«**Jemky:** *(Take it easy, we're just 'getting to know' them; we must establish a better friendship with them to be able to propose something like that).*

Diddy and Dixie, as the video recording forwarded, were filled with enormous indignation that they just wanted to get into the screen if they could, and warn themselves what they were exposing

themselves to with that quartet... A quartet that had not only turned out to be fake friends, but were actually fakes in every way.

>>>

Rocky (RICKY): *(It's your turn, Diddy)*, he said defiantly when they were playing target shooting. *(Let's see if you can get it right)*.

(Well, check this), Diddy replied, preparing his bow and shooting the arrows.

«**Rocky:** *(Hey, we have to admit that the monkey is very good at this)*, he said this time, sounding honest.

Melenky (MELVYN): *(Wow, you're an expert at this! It seems that now I do believe that you have been able to fight against a lizard king along with your uncle)*.

Rocky (RICKY): *(You should teach us)*.

(Will we play another round now or what?), Diddy suggested.

>>>

Rocky (RICKY): *(Hey, Diddy, and how has it been with Dixie?)*

(Well, the best), Diddy replied, smiling as he shot another arrow.

Melenky (MELVYN): *(And do you love her very much?)*

(Too much. She's incredible. More than just my girlfriend, she's the best friend I've ever met).

Rocky (RICKY): *(Wow, buddy, and how did you manage to win her heart, huh?)*, he asked curiously and gave him little pushes.

(Well, I don't know, I could say it just happened. We were very good friends for a long time. I liked her a lot, and when I was finally going to tell her, she told me that she liked me too... And she also told me that she already knew).

Melenky (MELVYN): *(Really? And how did she find out?)*

(Because those four fools from school told her. They had stolen a notebook where I had Dixie's name written in a heart and they showed it to her).

Melenky (MELVYN): *(What?! Geez, how evil)*.

Rocky (RICKY): *(Oh, those classmates you had were really bad)*, he commented, feigning disgust and as if trying to hold back a laugh.

Melenky (MELVYN): *(Hey, Diddy, and what do you like most about Dixie? Her face? Her eyes?)*

Rocky (RICKY): *(Or her hair?)*

(Well, of course, she's so cute), replied Diddy smiling. *(But what I like most about her is that she can achieve a lot of things, and no matter what happens, she's very strong. Don't tell her this, but...*

sometimes I think she's even braver than me... And besides, I feel that I can count on her, and she always listens and understands me... Really, she's so nice).

«**Melenky:** *(Is that serious what the dumb monkey says?)*, he commented in a mocking tone.

«**Rocky:** *(Oh, how boring; they make me laugh)*, he added, trying to contain a laugh.

«**Jemky:** *(I'm listening to them too)*, he said, intruding on the transmission. *(Ridiculous monkeys!)*

>>>

«**Jemky:** *(Oh, do girls do these little things with their friends?)*, he said with disgust as he combed Dixie's hair through 'Jenny'. *(Ugh, why did you let me be one of these mechanical girls?!)*

«**Mandrew:** *(Hey, but look on the bright side: as a girl you can be Dixie's friend)*, he replied with a few laughs. *(By the way, you have to admit that she did my hair better than she did you... I mean, to Mandy girl).*

«**Jemky:** *(Excuse me?! But my hair looked better on me... I mean, on Jenny).*

Jemky (JENNY): *(Wow, Dixie, you have beautiful hair)*, he commented as he continued to comb Dixie's hair and act a little over the top. *(I wish I had it like you).*

(Oh, thank you), Dixie replied, smiling at her. *(You have pretty hair too, Jenny, it's so soft and defined. And I like its color).*

Jemky (JENNY): *(Oh, thank you. But yours is long, shiny, silky, smells good... and it can fly).*

Mandrew (MANDY): *(You also have cute eyes, Dixie)*, she commented smiling at her.

(But yours are too), Dixie replied in kind.

Jemky (JENNY): *(You're so cute, Dixie. Diddy must be very lucky to have you as his girlfriend... By the way, how has it been for you with him?)*

(Oh, what can I say, we've done great), Dixie replied. *(He's such a cute monkey. He's very nice with me, and I love him very much).*

Mandrew (MANDY): *(How beautiful!)*, he exclaimed, acting overly tender. *(And you both never fight?)*

(Well, I could say that we only sometimes discuss who sleeps by the window), Dixie replied with a laugh.

Mandrew (MANDY): *(And how was your first kiss?)*

(Oh, it was somewhat strange), Dixie replied, giving a little laugh. *(I can tell you that it was the last thing that happened to us before the storm dragged us here. First, we were talking and then we were silent, and suddenly, we just looked at each other and... it happened. In that boat I didn't even have anywhere to run afterwards, I never expected my first kiss to be at that moment).*

Jemky (JENNY): *(Oh, how romantic! And how did he ask you to be his girlfriend?)*

(Well, that's a long story. First of all, I already knew that he liked me. The group of those four foolish kids from school told me; at first, I didn't want to believe them, but then I took a good look at how Diddy acted with me and I could confirm it).

Mandrew (MANDY): *(Oh, no. Those bad kids ruined the surprise).*

Jemky (JENNY): *(I see that those bad kids from your school have made your lives miserable),* he added, feigning disgust.

>>>

Mandrew (MANDY): *(And what do you like most about him, Dixie? His eyes, his nose, his face?)*

Jemky (JENNY): *(Does he say a lot of cute things to you all the time?)*

(Well, of course I like everything about him; he's a cute monkey. He's a little shy to express himself in that loving way, but... he listens to me and makes me smile when I'm fine and when I'm not too. He has never pretended to be someone different; he shows himself as he is. And besides, he's very brave... He says no, but he really is... He's really so cute).

Diddy and Dixie, while watching those scenes, tried to look away so as not to feel some shame by being present with each other listening to those words, after having broken their love bond.

«**Jemky:** *(But what the heck with these two?! I still don't understand how she liked that monkey! Literally, that stupid guy didn't have to do anything to win her love!)*

«**Mandrew:** *(That pair talks antics. They're dumbs).*

«**Melenky:** *(Do they also respond with the same nonsense?),* he said, interfering in the conversation. *(Seriously, they're just as ridiculous).*

And likewise, both felt more and more indignant upon hearing all the quartet's comments, and upon thinking that they had been close to them all the time.

They played the following video cassettes in fast motion, where each one of them filled them with more indignation until they made them stamp their feet with rage. In those days they had been so happy to have found four friends on that island with whom they could play and share moments, and that is what was seen in the following video recordings: the six of them spending nice days of entertainment, having long conversations, doing recreational activities, playing as a group of friends. Everything seemed to be great... except for the fact that, when hearing the voices of those four harmless kids at that time, they could also hear the intersecting voices of the other four evil kids, in addition to the comments of hatred and mockery towards Diddy and Dixie what the four of them said during the video recordings.

At the end of the day in those video recordings, the quartet was seen 'taking care' of the kidnapped kong children. Many of these children even spoke normally as if they were not under the effects of the hypnotizing mixture. They had become more self-sufficient; however, they didn't stop obeying the quartet to everything they told to them; the latter were even teaching them certain techniques with which they built that ship.

Then, Diddy and Dixie played the following video cassettes in fast motion. This time they tried the one titled:

>>> *"Day 55. Ship proposal to that pair of monkeys"*

(Will you feed us now?), asked one of the kidnapped kong children, who were already beginning to speak independently to the quartet.

Mandrew (MANDY): *(In a few minutes we'll bring food to you, don't worry).*

(I want to build that ship right now!), replied another of the kidnapped children, expressing himself with apparent normality.

Rocky (RICKY): *(We'll start with that the other week. We haven't yet introduced the pair of monkeys that we always mention to you; they'll also go with us).*

«**Jemky:** *(Hey, and it's already afternoon, we have to go see those monkeys; today we'll tell them about the ship).*

(Is also your name Jemky?), one of the kidnapped girls asked 'Jenny'.

Jemky (JENNY): *(No, no, no! My name is Jenny, call me JENNY. Our names are Jenny, Mandy, Melvyn and Ricky ; forget about those other names we call each other. And don't mention them at all when we'll bring you that couple of monkeys! Never do that!)*

>>>

In next scenes, the quartet were near the treehouse, where they appeared to be waiting for Diddy and Dixie to arrive.

«**Melenky:** *(Hey... don't get me wrong, but... I like those two monkeys better now).*

«**Rocky:** *(Say what?!)*, he exclaimed in a shocked tone, at the same time as the other two. *(What did you say?!)*

«**Melenky:** *(Oh, I meant that I still dislike them and will forever, but... they're not so bad now that we've become their 'friends').*

«**Mandrew:** *(Well, I hate to say it, but... I think I feel the same way. And I even believe that if we hadn't found them here, this mission wouldn't be the same; they have made it more entertaining, even if it's to make fun of them. And I even hate to admit that I like playing with them, and even when we meet with Dixie to play girl games).*

«**Rocky:** *(Oh, okay, I hate to say it too, but I think it's true... Moreover, Diddy was our friend a long time ago and he really wasn't that bad. He was just too cowardly for our games; he didn't want to eat millipede sweets with us, and not to mention when he threw our guns into the sea. I didn't know Dixie well before, but she's almost like Diddy. Sometimes those two are cool).*

«**Jemky:** *(Are those two monkeys cool? Well... it must be said; I think they're on certain occasions, but... Bah! I really dislike them anyway! Stupid monkeys!)*

«**Melenky:** *(Yeah, they're pathetic monkeys anyway).*

«**Mandrew:** *(Yeah, a pair of gecko-faced dwarf monkeys!... And look, here they come!)*

«**Jemky:** *(Well, do everything as planned).*

(How are you, friends!), Diddy greeted them with joy arriving along with Dixie.

(Are you ready for another adventure?), Dixie added.

(Of course we are!), all four replied.

>>>

Jemky (JENNY): *(Well, friends, it's that... we have a proposal for you).*

(Proposal? About what?), Diddy asked.

Rocky (RICKY): *(You see, we know that you want and need to return to your island, and well... I think we can help you).*

>>>

Mandrew (MANDY): *(Well, we were thinking about building a ship. But a large and very resistant one, that can withstand storms. And we wanted to know if... you want to join too).*

Rocky (RICKY): *(Yeah, and then we can take you to your island. And if we rush, it could be ready in a couple of weeks or less. You'll be on your island in less time than expected!)*

(Wait, wait), Dixie interrupted. (But are you sure you know well that 'safe route' that can lead us to DK Island? I've not heard anyone here who knows anything like that).

Mandrew (MANDY): *(Oh, come on! You're talking to a quartet of kids who have spent almost their entire lives exploring islands. We've been through that route whenever it's hurricane season).*

>>>

«**Melenky:** *(Are you sure we have convinced them?),* he whispered as they watched Diddy and Dixie talking privately about the proposal.

«**Jemky:** *(I know we did, just wait).*

(Okay, friends... We agree), Dixie announced to them.

(Yeah!), exclaimed the four, showing enthusiasm.

Melenky (MELVYN): *(It'll be a great adventure and we'll have a lot of fun; you'll see).*

(By the way...why do you want to do this?), Diddy asked them.

Jemky (JENNY): *(Oh... it's that, well... we just wanted to do something nice for you),* he replied, smiling at them and feigning kindness. *(You've been very good to us all this time we've known you).*

Mandrew (MANDY): *(Yeah, only you have accepted us as we are),* he added, pretending too. *(You're one of the few who don't make us feel discriminated against).*

Rocky (RICKY): *(And we think this is a great way to return the favor to you. We haven't known you for long, but... I think we haven't ever had friends as kind and great as you.).*

“They couldn't be more hypocritical,” Dixie commented, very angry and grumbling while watching that scene in the video.

>>>

(Hey, friends), Diddy said quietly to 'Ricky' and 'Melvyn' later on. (I need a little help).

Rocky (RICKY): *(Yeah? What do you need, Diddy?)*

(It's that... I want to give Dixie a gift, but I still don't know what it could be).

Rocky (RICKY): *(A gift, you say? And... what do you plan to give her?)*

(I don't know yet, that's why I'm asking if you have any suggestions... In fact, I have something specific to give her, I was thinking about an emerald. But I need more things to add, you know... those gifts with details. You said that you have had a girlfriend, didn't you give them some kind of gift like that?)

«**Melenky:** *(A gift, that monkey says?... Is he still thinking about gifts for Dixie?)*

«**Rocky:** *(Never mind! Let's say yes, we still have to say yes to everything).*

>>>

Rocky (RICKY): *(But we could help you anyway, buddy. You see, with the emerald maybe we can help you get it. But for those details you say, ask the girls that; they know more about those couple gifts).*

«**Jemky:** *(Excuse me?!)*

>>>

«**Jemky:** *(And why did you involve Mandrew and me in this?!),* he later replied to Rocky.

«**Rocky:** *(You gave gifts to Dixie, so I entrusted it specifically to you).*

«**Jemky:** *(I'm sorry, but I'm not going to cooperate with that monkey to give a gift to that ungrateful fool girl who didn't even accept one of my gifts... And why does that stupid monkey want to give her a gift? He doesn't need to do that anymore; he already won her love).*

«**Rocky:** *(Hey, brother, leave the resentment for now; we have to continue treating those two nicely).*

«**Mandrew:** *(Bah, I'm also tired of pretending to be good to them... What if we do some prank on them or something?)*

«**Melenky:** *(Hey... what if... we help them with their little gift... but we also ruin it?)*

«**Rocky:** *(No! We can't be mean to them if what we want is to make them also go on the ship with the other children).*

«**Jemky:** *(I agree! We can put a trap or some bad surprise in their stupid little gift. I can help you so!)*

«**Mandrew:** *(Hey, that's not a bad idea! After all, I've been needing to make fun of them for a long time).*

«**Rocky:** *(Wait, wait! I admit it: I also need to make fun of that pair of pathetic monkeys, but we are on a KIDNAPPING mission, and we're not going to achieve it with those two that way).*

«**Jemky:** *(Relax, it'll be a TRAP, meaning they WON'T discover that it was us. What's more, if you say that we should treat them nicely, then we can also remedy that trap later to make ourselves look good to them... It would have to be some trap with which we make Dixie angry with Diddy... Hmm, I think I got an idea).*

>>>

Jemky (JENNY): *(And so, we were thinking that you could give Dixie a box. You know, those that carry flowers, candies, and of course: love notes. Girls love those details).*

(Okay. But... how would I hide such a gift so that Dixie doesn't find out yet?), Diddy asked.

Mandrew (MANDY): *(Don't worry. If you want, we can have it here and then you'll come to pick it up again when you want to deliver it to her).*

(Okay, girls. I really thank you. Hey, and I got an idea: how about if the six of us go to the animal shelter tomorrow? You two will distract Dixie while I'll return here with Ricky and Melvyn to pick the gift up, and then give it to Dixie).

Jemky (JENNY): *(I think it's a good plan! I'm sure Dixie will like it a lot).*

Mandrew (MANDY): *(Hey, Diddy, but... what is that shelter like?)*

(Don't worry, all the animals there are good. And as we told you, some are even our friends).

Jemky (JENNY): *(Well, so, there is no need to fear... So, how about we start?)*

«**Rocky:** *(One moment! How are we going to go to that shelter?! We can't expose ourselves!)*

«**Jemky:** *(You said we should say yes to everything and treat them nicely, right?),* he said in a mocking tone.

>>>

Jemky (JENNY): *(Only the letters left, Diddy, aren't you going to put them on it?)*

(I'll write those later and bring them tomorrow), Diddy replied, getting up. *(It's that Dixie was feeling a little scared because of some nightmares she had, and I don't want to leave her like that until very late).*

Mandrew (MANDY): *(Oh, you're so good to her. You guys are so adorable together).*

Jemky (JENNY): *(Yeah, you're both a cute little couple. You're our favorite couple!)*

>>>

(I really appreciate everything; you're good friends), Diddy said to 'Jenny'.

Jemky (JENNY): *(It's nothing, Diddy. That's what we're here for... Wow... how lucky Dixie must be to have a boyfriend like you).*

(Of course. And I feel lucky to have her, too).

«**Jemky:** *(Ugh, how I hate you, monkey!)*

>>>

(I really thank you, friends, seriously), Diddy told them before leaving. (Don't forget, we'll see you tomorrow).

Rocky (RICKY): *(Okay, buddy. That's what we're here for),* he replied by patting him on the shoulder. *(And count on us for tomorrow).*

(See you later, Diddy!), the four said goodbye to Diddy... before uttering insults and taunts towards him when he had already left.

>>> “Day 56. Carnivorous plant”

«**Rocky:** *(If something goes wrong coming to this shelter, it's your fault!)*

«**Jemky:** *(Hey, relax, maybe no one knows us and we'll pass along like any other kids).*

Mandrew (MANDY): *(Wow! This place is amazing),* she said as looking around the shelter.

Melenky (MELVYN): *(It's super spacious. I think we would have come here at the beginning).*

Jemky (JENNY): *(Are they all the animals you rescued from the zoo?),* she asked, pointing to all the animals in general.

(They are some of them; others were already here when we arrived), Dixie replied.

«**Rocky:** *(I still don't believe they could have carried out a rescue mission like that).*

>>>

(By the way, friends, the apes who owned this shelter made a banana cake), a zebra commented to Diddy, Dixie and the quartet. *(You can go eat some if you want. Oh, your new friends can eat too).*

(Banana cake? That's great!), Diddy exclaimed before talking to the four kids. *(What do you say, friends? Do you want to?)*

«**Rocky:** *(Don't accept! These mechanical monkeys can't swallow anything).*

Jemky (JENNY): *(Uhh... No, thanks. We don't want to eat anything for now).*

(Really? Not even a banana cake?), Dixie added, trying to cheer them up.

Rocky (RICKY): *(No, no, it's that... we ate recently and we are full. And we don't like cakes, thank you).*

>>>

(My son!), exclaimed that gorilla who was surely the father of the kong child whom they called 'Ricky'. He took him in his arms and hugged him quite affectionately.

Rocky (RICKY): *(Say what?!), he replied all confused.*

(I can't believe it, my son!), said the gorilla while Ricky, or rather Rocky, was still confused. (Hey, everyone, I found my son!)

«**Rocky:** *(Oh, no! Darn, darn, darn! Don't tell me that this gorilla knows this kid!)*

«**Mandrew:** *(No, no, no, tell him you don't know him!)*

«**Jemky:** *(Deny it as much as you can!)*

(My child, you don't know how long I waited to see you again and-)

Rocky (RICKY): *(No, no, no! Wait a moment, sir!), he interrupted, trying to get out of the gorilla's arms. (I think you have been confused, but I don't know you).*

(What are you saying? I'm your father! Look at you, you've grown up since the last time I saw you when I got caught by those circus tamers-)

(Wait a minute!), Diddy interrupted, who was also confused. (Are you sure he's your son?)

(Of course he's; he even liked to dress like that with these shirts over one another. It's my son Tommy!)

Rocky (RICKY): *(Hey, no, sir! There must be a misunderstanding here), he insisted, getting free completely. (My name is Ricky, maybe you confused me with your son you mention).*

«**Rocky:** *(I told you not to come here! Someone who knows these mechanical monkeys could find us out!)*

«**Jemky:** *(Just act like it's true!)*

>>>

Melenky (MELVYN): *(Hey, Dixie), he said, walking towards her. (Diddy is waiting for you out there).*

Rocky (RICKY): *(He has a surprise for you).*

(A surprise?), Dixie exclaimed in confusion.

Mandrew (MANDY): *(That's right, that's why he went out).*

Jemky (JENNY): *(Go, what are you waiting for, Dixie?!)*

When Dixie went out, she met Diddy, while the four kids decided to stay near the shelter to give privacy to their two 'friends'... or rather, they went to take other actions and hid behind some trees while they kept an eye on both.

(What's going on, Diddy?), Dixie was heard saying in the distance.

(Uh, it's that... I have something for you. Come on, let's go home for a while).

«**Jemky:** *(It's now or never! Go, let's go!)*

The quartet began to run at full speed until later arriving under the tree of Mr. Pinky's very house. They began to rummage through the bushes under said tree, and took out the gift box for Dixie.

«**Jemky:** *(Here it is! Do as we planned!)*, he said while holding the box through 'Jenny'.

'Mandy' took the emerald and began to hit it with a sharp stone, trying to make cuts to weaken it.

On the other hand, 'Melvyn' and 'Ricky' headed to another nearby bush, where they had hidden a carnivorous plant, which was tied in a small box. They took the plant to the gift box, and hid it at the bottom of it, causing it to get lost among the flowers there. Then, 'Mandy' also put the fragmented emerald in the box, making sure it didn't break in her hands yet. Finally, 'Jenny' put the letter envelopes, from which she extracted the latter.

"Oh, darn them!" Diddy exclaimed indignantly, looking at the scene where his gift was ruined.

«**Melenky:** *(Here come those two, let's hide!)*

>>>

«**Jemky:** *(I need to see this)*, he said with a malicious tone while they watched the two behind the bushes. *(They'll surely fight about that).*

«**Mandrew:** *(Look, she's already opening the box).*

(Oh, so, this was a surprise), Dixie commented with a little laugh as she looked at Diddy's gift. *(It's very nice of you, Diddy. Thank you, really).*

(You're welcome, Dix), Diddy replied.

(Wow, this emerald is very pretty), said Dixie as she took the emerald. *(And it also shines-)*

(What...?!), Diddy exclaimed, confused when he saw that the emerald had broken. *(Oh, no, but what happened?... I-I swear it wasn't like that all this time, Dixie).*

«**Melenky:** *(Oh, poor monkey, how it turned out badly!)*, he said while laughing out loud with the rest of the quartet.

«**Jemky:** *(And this is just the beginning! Now she's looking at the letters... if she can find them).*

(Huh? What's up, Dix?), Diddy asked, noticing another expression on Dixie's face.

(It's that... there's nothing here), Dixie replied, showing the inside of the envelope and not finding any letter.

(But... how is it possible?), Diddy said as he grabbed the envelope and checked inside. *(Oh, it can't be, I'm sure I recently saved it... Or maybe I left it. Sorry again, Dixie).*

«**Jemky:** *(Oops, what a pity, monkeys)*, he commented sarcastically, before bursting out laughing with the rest of the group.

«**Mandrew:** *(No, no, no, I need to see how this ends!)*, he added while continuing to laugh. *(Look, look, look! Here comes the best part!)*

(Wow, the flowers are so pretty), Dixie commented as she examined the flowers. *(All are of different colors and also- AAAHHH!)*

Dixie began to scream and shake her arm in desperation, at the same time she dropped the box against the floor. That carnivorous plant was biting her arm.

(Don't worry! I'll help you!), Diddy exclaimed as he hastened to help Dixie.

For the quartet, it was like watching a comedy show. Their unstoppable laughter could be heard so loudly that they made it seem like the audio from the recording was having errors.

«**Rocky:** *(Okay, I admit it, I admit it! This was fun and better than I thought!)*, he said while continuing to laugh out loud with the other three kids.

«**Mandrew:** *(I think we should do this more often!)*

«**Jemky:** *(No, please! I'm not going to put up with so much laughter later!)*

«**Melenky:** *(I've never bothered a couple before, it's so fun!)*

«**Jemky:** *(Well, now we'll activate ourselves in 'good friends' mode again).*

>>>

Jemky (JENNY): *(But... what happened to Dixie?!)*, 'she' asked, pretending to be shocked at seeing Dixie's injured arm.

(You see, friends, I don't know if you've noticed before, but... in the flowers you showed me, there was a carnivorous plant and it attacked Dixie).

(What?! A... carnivorous plant?), the four of them exclaimed, pretending to be confused and, clearly, holding back their laughter.

Mandrew (MANDY): *(But what are you saying? There were no carnivorous plants in those flowers, it shouldn't)*, she commented carefully taking Dixie's arm.

Jemky (JENNY): *(We checked them well and there was nothing. Oh, no, we're really sorry, friends. It must have been our fault).*

(No, don't worry, maybe that plant was infiltrated by accident), Dixie replied, calming them down. *(Oh, and I also thank you guys for helping Diddy with the details... even if it turned out like that).*

Rocky (RICKY): *(And what about the other things in the gift? Was everything okay?)*

(Well, in fact everything was ruined), Diddy replied, disappointed in himself. *(The emerald broke, the letter was lost and the chewing gum fell off when Dixie was attacked by that plant).*

Melenky (MELVYN): *(Oh, no, we're so sorry, friends)*, he said feigning pity along with the other three kids.

"But how shameless those four stupid kids are!" Dixie exclaimed, watching that scene with indignation.

Jemky (JENNY): *(Uh, hey... but I think we have something to fix this. Is your injury serious, Dixie?)*

(Yes... and it hurts a lot), Dixie replied, rubbing her arm.

Jemky (JENNY): *(Well, do you remember we mentioned that we know a medicine ape? He had a remedy that can heal wounds in less than five minutes).*

Mandrew (MANDY): *(You mean what he used to cure my injury, Jenny?),* she asked, playing along.

Jemky (JENNY): *(That one!)*

(In less than five minutes?), Dixie questioned. *(Are you saying it... seriously?)*

Rocky (RICKY): *(Yes, literally, in less than five minutes it even leaves you without a scar. It worked with Mandy last time, do you remember?)*

>>>

«**Jemky:** *(Wait... Didn't Dixie get mad at that monkey?),* he said in a disappointed tone while they watched Diddy and Dixie together outside the house from afar.

(Don't worry, everything was still nice and you made me smile a lot, believe me you did), Dixie could be heard saying while hugging Diddy and smiling at him. *(And this wound will heal... If you want, you can give me another new surprise gift later).*

(I know... but everything was ruined, not even the bubblegums were left), Diddy replied, quite disappointed.

(It doesn't matter anymore, Diddy, at least you tried and I still thank you very much for the detail you had with me), Dixie said before giving him a kiss on the cheek. *(I love you so much, Diddy, and you always make me so happy).*

(I love you too, Dix), Diddy replied, hugging her back and caressing her cheeks and hair.

«**Jemky:** *(URGH, I THOUGHT THEY WERE GOING TO FIGHT! Girls are supposed to get angry if their boyfriends give them disastrous gifts!... HUH, but all my darn gifts were rejected by that fool girl!)*

«**Mandrew:** *(Bah, there's no doubt that that monkey girl likes monkey boys that are cowardly and clumsy).*

«**Jemky:** *(Anyway, let's go get that healing mixture, before I feel like going out and kidnapping them by force right now!)*

"Whiner orangutan," Dixie commented, rolling her eyes as she listened to him on the video recording.

>>>

Mandrew (MANDY): *(Excuse us, we took a long time because that medicine ape had to prepare the mixture),* she stated in reference to the healing mixture they had.

Melenky (MELVYN): *(And it took too long),* he added with a shrug.

Jemky (JENNY): *(Well, let me see your arm, Dixie),* she said while holding the jar.

Dixie removed the bandage from her arm and showed them her wound. The four of them made a gesture of pain and compassion when they saw it... or rather, they faked it.

Jemky (JENNY): *(Wow, that plant really hurt you),* she commented as she held her arm and got ready to heal the wound. *(Well, now look at this. It'll only hurt a little).*

>>>

(It's time for dinner, kids- Huh?), Mr. Pinky said before seeing the quartet. *(Oh, hello... Let me guess: are you Mr. Diddy and Miss Dixie's friends?)*

(Yes, mister, it's them), Diddy replied, pointing at them.

«**Jemky:** *(It can't be, it's really Mr. Pinky!)*

Melenky (MELVYN): *(Nice to see you... Mr. Pinky, I'm Melvyn),* he said, running to shake the teacher's hand.

(Wow, so you're their new friends. Nice meeting you too, children), the teacher replied after greeting them all. *(Mr. Diddy and Miss Dixie always talk to me about you; they say you're good friends... Oh, and they tell me that you were my students, is that... true?)*

«**Rocky:** *(Act as if you have known him all your life).*

Jemky (JENNY): *(Ah, yes, Mr. Pinky, don't you remember us? We were your students a couple of years ago).*

(Hey... Uhh, I just want you to excuse me, but... I don't remember you. I mean, I've had so many students; I don't always remember them all).

Melenky (MELVYN): *(Don't you really remember us, Mr. Pinky?),* he asked, simulating a sad look. *(I was your favorite student).*

(Favorite student? Oh... I'm really sorry, kids, but I don't remember seeing your face. But don't worry, I could meet you again), he added, smiling at them in the last sentence, but then his face changed. *(Hmm, although... excuse me for a moment).*

«**Mandrew:** *(But what is wrong with him? Why does he grab Mandy's hair?)*

Mandrew (MANDY): *(W-what's up, Mr. Pinky?)*

(Your name is Mandy, right?... Oh, sorry, it's that... you look a lot like a little girl who disappeared on this island a few months ago and they have been searching for her so much. Although she had her hair up and her name was Destiny).

«**Rocky:** *(Ugh, tell him you know nothing, Mandrew, deny everything he questions you!)*

Mandrew (MANDY): *(No, no, I've never disappeared. We haven't even had a family).*

>>>

(A medicine ape? I don't remember knowing that there was a medicine ape here), the teacher stated after being told about how they had healed Dixie's wound. (Where does he live?)

«**Jemky:** *(Give him any excuse, even if it's stupid!)*

Rocky (RICKY): *(Uhh... well, he lives in a corner of this island, in a cave. But he doesn't want anyone to visit him, that's why he's not as well known).*

(Okay, it was a good act on your part to help Miss Dixie anyways), the teacher said to the quartet. (By the way, it's going to be time for dinner, don't you want to come too as an act of gratitude?)

«**Rocky:** *(No, don't accept food!)*

Mandrew (MANDY): *(Oh, we really thank you, Mr. Pinky. But... we already have something prepared at our house, so it could be for another occasion).*

(No, no, I can't just leave you like that. Or if you want, take it home, what do you think?), the teacher told them kindly.

>>>

«**Jemky:** *('... now I understand, Dixie, I understand how nice it feels to love someone this way. I love you so much, Dix, and I want us to continue being happy and together forever. I hope you like this detail' ... Urgh! How I hate those two!)*, he exclaimed, clutching the paper as they read the letters that Diddy was going to give Dixie in the ruined gift.

«**Mandrew:** *(Yeah, yeah, that's what I told my ex-girlfriend and she even still left me because of her baboon-faced she had as a boyfriend later), he said with disgust.*

«**Rocky:** *(Hey, I admit that what that dumb monkey writes to her makes me laugh. He doesn't know how to write love letters; he just tells her that he feels good with her, he doesn't tell her deep things like that she's the best thing that's ever happened to him in his entire life or some romantic phrase, I don't know).*

«**Jemky:** *(Yeah, just look how he writes here: 'I don't know how it could happen, but now you and I are together' ... AHHH! I still don't understand how the heck that DUMB did it!)*, he grumbled before starting to tear the letters to pieces through 'Jenny'.

«**Melenky:** *(Maybe one day those two stupid monkeys are going to break up, don't worry. Throughout their lives, they'll meet more boys and girls that they'll like too, and there they'll forget about each other, or they may even cheat on each other).*

«**Jemky:** *(One moment!)*, he exclaimed, calming down before pausing. *(What if... we make them break up or something?)*

«**Mandrew:** *(Hey... it doesn't sound like such a bad idea), he added in a tone of excitement. (Can we do that?)*

«**Rocky:** *(No, no, no, we can't do that, we must take them well on that ship!)*

«**Jemky:** (I said 'make them break up', that is, make them two fight and hate each other. About taking them on the ship, we can take them anyways).

«**Melenky:** (We could set some other trap for them or something to make them fight).

«**Jemky:** (No, no, I don't think we need another trap... You mentioned it, Melenky: more boys and girls who they might like... and I was thinking... that maybe I can't steal that dumb monkey's girlfriend now, but... I can steal her stupid boyfriend from her... I'm going to steal him from her! I'LL DO THAT!)

«**Melenky:** (Uh... Jemky, what did you say?... So, you to that monkey...)

«**Rocky:** (Hey, Jemky... is that you?), he asked, starting to laugh a little.

«**Jemky:** (Oh, not me, fools! I'm talking about Jenny! She'll do it... I mean, yes, I would, but through Jenny, do you understand?)

«**Mandrew:** (And will that work with that monkey?)

«**Jemky:** (Please, are you going to tell me that Jenny isn't so pretty? I bet even that monkey might have thought about it at some point).

«**Rocky:** (It's true, Jenny is a very pretty girl, but... that monkey looks so in love with Dixie).

«**Jemky:** (Oh, come on. Do you notice that Diddy is a boy? It's so easy for a boy to fall for a girl, in fact, I bet you anything that the first attempt that monkey will fall, and if it's not on the first attempt, it'll be on the second. And after I get it, you guys tell Dixie and we'll make her know and that's it. With that, her love for that dumb monkey will be completely over!)

«**Rocky:** (Hey, I don't think Diddy is going to fall in love with another girl, just look at him... you can see how he has eyes only for Dixie).

«**Jemky:** (Oh, and are you going to believe that?), he said in a mocking tone. (With girls you have to convince them, win their heart, give them gifts and be kind to them so that they want to give you a chance, not with boys; with them everything is easier, they fall the first attempt).

«**Melenky:** (Hey, but then if that happens... are you going to pretend to be that monkey's new 'girlfriend' until the end?), he asked before starting to laugh out loud along with Mandrew and Rocky.

«**Jemky:** (Ugh, it's true! I hadn't thought about it... Never mind, there I'll break up with him too and that stupid monkey will run out of girlfriends).

«**Mandrew:** (Just like how you stayed because all your ex-girlfriends broke up with you?)

«**Jemky:** (UGH, SHUT UP or better YOU take that monkey from her! You're also one of the girls!)

«**Mandrew:** (Don't be a clown, you do it!)

(Hey, will you make us more of this food? It was so delicious!), one of the kidnapped kong children came to tell them with a tray of leftover food.

Jemky (JENNY): *(Uh, no, that food was given to us by a teacher where those two monkeys that we're going to introduce to you next week live), he replied smiling at them.*

«**Rocky:** *(Alright, and we have to tell these children about next week's matter).*

Rocky (RICKY): *(HEY, EVERYONE, COME HERE FOR A MOMENT, PLEASE!)*, he ordered the herd of kidnapped kongs, and they gathered in rows in front of the quartet as if it were an army. *(Well, as you know, at the beginning of next week we'll begin to build that ship and we'll also introduce you to those two monkeys we always talk about. So please, do everything we tell you to do. BEWARE about calling us any other way than Jenny, Melvyn, Ricky or Mandy. AND PLEASE, if they ask you something like if you hated us and treated us badly when we were little and now we're your friends, TELL THEM YES, and tell them that whole story that we made up. Oh, and by the way, we're going to introduce you little by little, and as the days go by, we'll introduce the rest... Okay?!)*

(Okay!), they all replied in unison as if they were a choir.

«**Mandrew:** *(Oh, they're so adorable, obeying everything).*

>>> "Day 59. First day of the ship"

(Wow, wait a minute), Diddy said, confused. (Are you referring to those kids you lived with when you were little?... The ones you didn't get along with?)

Rocky (RICKY): *(Yes, the same ones. But that was many years ago when we were very young. Now that we meet them again, we decided to forget all those grudges and better be friends).*

Jemky (JENNY): *(By the way, they're at our house right now. Do you want to come and meet them?)*

>>>

Mandrew (MANDY): *(Okay, they're coming!)*, he said to the entire herd inside the tree house. *(Please, everyone greet them and say that they're our best friends!)*

Then, Diddy and Dixie appeared on the scene, entering the quartet's house.

Mandrew (MANDY): *(Hey! Diddy! Dixie! How are you?)*, she greeted them with joy. *(Oh, yeah, look, we introduce you to some old friends; they-)*

(You are Diddy and Dixie?!), asked one of the children approaching Diddy and Dixie.

(Well yes... it's us), Diddy replied confused.

(Ricky, Melvyn, Jenny and Mandy talk a lot about you!), added another of the children with a very cheerful voice. (They say you are their best friends).

(Yes, yes... Of course), Dixie replied with a forced smile.

(Is it true that you saved them from a kidnapper ape?!), they continued asking.

«**Rocky:** *(Ugh, they're going to riot), he said as they saw all the kong children crowding towards Diddy and Dixie.*

Mandrew (MANDY): *(HEY! Stop now! Silence!)*, she exclaimed, making everyone quiet. *(Let them talk, you are scaring them!)*

(Oh, we're sorry), the children said in succession as they walked away again.

Mandrew (MANDY): *(Uh, excuse us, friends)*, she said to Diddy and Dixie. *(As I said, they are all our old friends, the ones we mentioned from when we were abandoned almost as babies. A few days ago, they arrived right on this island and we met again, and well... we received them here. Now, everyone greet Diddy and Dixie).*

>>>

Jemky (JENNY): *(Don't worry, we're going to teach them how to build a boat, including you. And rest assured; when the ship is ready, we'll take you home first).*

(Okay... So, what are we waiting for?), Diddy replied with a forced smile. *(We can start as soon as possible).*

Rocky (RICKY): *(Well, so, let's talk to the others).*

>>>

Jemky (JENNY): *(Well, here's all we have to do)*, she said, pointing to the entire plan of the ship... which had been given to them by the group of adult mandrills and orangutans. *(We'll have to follow everything to a T. Don't worry, we'll help you with any difficulties you have).*

(Hey... and where did you get this sketch plan?), Diddy asked them.

Melenky (MELVYN): *(We did it. It took us two whole days to do it).*

(Wow... I didn't know you drew so well), Dixie complimented. *(Seriously, it's all good...detailed).*

«**Mandrew:** *(If they knew why we're going to build that ship).*

>>>

Jemky (JENNY): *(Hey, Diddy. Could you come and help us with something?)*

(Yes, what's going on?), Diddy asked as he held up a beam.

Jemky (JENNY): *(We need some specific vines that we saw over there, but they are very high. Could you help me take them down, please?)*

>>>

«**Mandrew:** *(Hey, Jemky, and will that monkey give in just like that?)*

«**Jemky:** *(I've already said it: he's a boy, at the first attempt I'll make Dixie's first horn grow, you'll see).*

Jemky (JENNY): *(Hey, Diddy)*, she said, heading towards him. *(Has Dixie told you you're a cute monkey?)*

(She always tells me that), Diddy replied with a little laugh as he continued untangling vines. (Why?)

Jemky (JENNY): *(I see... Because... you really are, Diddy).*

(Uhh... really?), Diddy said with a forced smile.

Jemky (JENNY): *(Yes, Diddy), she replied, smiling and running her hand over his face. (You're a very brave monkey... and very handsome too. Ever since I met you, I've thought that about you, Diddy, you know?)*

(Uhh, yes, thank you, Jenny, b-but... I have to go and get on with what I was doing before), Diddy replied, moving away immediately.

Both Diddy and Dixie looked at each other without knowing what expression to put on as they watched and listened to that scene, while several thoughts came to mind as they saw what was actually happening.

>>>

Jemky (JENNY): *(Wow, Diddy, I also see you're very gentlemanly), she said before trying to hug him.*

(Hey, hey, wait a minute!), Diddy exclaimed, turning away earlier. (What's wrong with you, Jenny?!)

Jemky (JENNY): *(Oh, I just wanted to give you a hug of thanks), she said, giving little laughs.*

«**Jemky:** *(He's just nervous; the next time I'll make him fall).*

"Oh, no, it can't be," Diddy commented, rolling his eyes as he watched the video recording.

>>> "Day 60. Second day"

Jemky (JENNY): *(Here come Diddy and Dixie), he whispered to another group of kidnapped kong children who were going to be introduced that day. (You already know how to behave).*

Rocky (RICKY): *(Hey, hi, friends, how's it going?!), he said as he saw Diddy and Dixie arrive, and then the other three of the group greeted them.*

(Hi... how are you?), Diddy and Dixie replied, showing curiosity about the other kong children who were with them.

Mandrew (MANDY): *(Oh, yes, we introduce you to some more friends who arrived), she said, pointing to them. (And by the way, we warn you once and for all that more of them will keep coming these days, so don't be surprised).*

(You must be Diddy and Dixie, right?!), one of the new kids asked them.

(Hello. Yes... the same ones), the two replied, somewhat confused.

>>> "Day 64. Friendly meeting"

Rocky (RICKY): *(By the way, we were thinking we could meet here tonight).*

(To continue with the ship?!), Diddy and Dixie asked.

Rocky (RICKY): *(No, of course not. I mean just hanging around together, you know: like at a party or meeting, to share everybody and so on. To relax after so much work).*

«**Mandrew:** *(Are we really going to meet to play with all of them?)*

«**Rocky:** *(Of course, aren't you tired?)*

«**Jemky:** *(What's more... we could make a trick on those pair of stupid monkeys to see if they fight, what do you say?)*

>>>

Jemky (JENNY): *(Wait, Diddy!),* she said as Diddy tried to run away from her, after helping her with something that had nothing to do with the ship. *(It still needs to adjust these vines a little more).*

(Oh, but what are we going to use this on the ship for?), Diddy asked.

Jemky (JENNY): *(They're for decoration. Come on, it's fast),* she replied before Diddy began to make the adjustments. *(Oh, you're so cute with me, Diddy),* she added, hugging him, to which Diddy looked at her strangely and tried to get away from her.

«**Jemky:** *(Urgh, this monkey is a coward!)*

>>>

Rocky (RICKY): *(Hi, Diddy! Hi, Dixie!),* he greeted them with the group, and then they both greeted them back that night of the challenges. *(Good thing you came).*

(Hasn't everything started yet?), Dixie asked.

Mandrew (MANDY): *(No, we're going to make candies first. We were waiting for you).*

(Okay, it sounds great), Diddy said excitedly.

Jemky (JENNY): *(Well, what are you waiting for? Come with us! We're going to have a lot of fun).*

>>>

«**Rocky:** *(Let's see if the monkey doesn't chicken out with this and if he's really in love with Dixie).*

Rocky (RICKY): *(Hmm... I think I have something better... Well, I dare you to... go to one of the girls and... give her a kiss).*

(Uhh... to Dixie, right?), Diddy asked in a confused tone.

Rocky (RICKY): *(No, no, to any of the other girls. Any that isn't Dixie).*

(W-what?!... How?), Diddy exclaimed, shocked, before starting to laugh. *(Hey, Ricky, you must be kidding, right?)*

Rocky (RICKY): *(No, no, I'm not kidding. I'm really proposing that challenge to you. Come on, do it if you dare).*

>>>

«**Rocky:** *(Oh, is it serious about this monkey?!),* he exclaimed as they struggled with Diddy.

(NO, NO! Stop! Leave me alone! What's wrong with you?!), Diddy exclaimed, raising his voice and pushing the two kids away. *(Understand, I can't and don't want to do that).*

«**Melenky:** *(This monkey is even a coward for this?!)*

Melenky (MELVYN): *(Hey... don't you like girls?!)*

(But I don't want to!), replied Diddy. *(I mean, it's not to be a killjoy with the game, but I don't go to that limit either).*

Rocky (RICKY): *(Oh, please, Diddy! There's nothing wrong! You just have to kiss one of the girls... Aren't you a real monkey?!)*

(And what does that have to do with it?! You know well that I can't! I don't want to do that to Dixie!)

«**Melenky:** *(Hmm! He says it as if he's always going to think that way and he's going to like Dixie forever).*

>>>

Rocky (RICKY): *(Oh, but don't be boring, Diddy! Not all your life you'll be falling for one girl; someday you'll like many more! Can't you just kiss another girl just because you think you'll look bad on your girlfriend?!... Hmm, it looks like you're a... cowardly butterfly!)*

(Do you know something?... You make me laugh), Diddy told the two with a mocking smile. *(Are either of you carrying a coin right now?)*

Rocky (RICKY): *(Huh? And what does that have to do with here? Why would we need a coin?)*

(So you can buy the opinion that I did NOT ask you for about Dixie and me!)

«**Rocky:** *(Urgh, this dumb monkey!... What do we say to him?)*

«**Melenky:** *(Oh, throw that gum in his face or I don't know!)*

>>>

Jemky (JENNY): *(Oh, come on, Dixie! It's just a kiss),* she said, giving her a little push when they played with the other kong girls and some boys. *(There will be nothing wrong with it).*

(B-but... I have a boyfriend!), Dixie exclaimed. *(I wouldn't do that to Diddy).*

Mandrew (MANDY): *(And is there any problem with that? Don't worry, we're not going to say anything to Diddy).*

>>>

(But I don't want to! Don't you understand?!), Dixie exclaimed as she struggled to get free from 'Jenny' and 'Mandy' when they tried to force her to kiss another kong boy, until she later pushed them away. (NO! LET GO OF ME! I already told you I don't want to play this!)

«**Mandrew:** *(Oh, and this one is even worse than that monkey!)*

Jemky (JENNY): *(Oh, Dixie, please, it's just a game! Almost all of us have already played, you haven't yet! Can't you give a simple kiss? Just imagine that this boy is Diddy... Or don't tell me you don't do it because 'you don't want to be disloyal to your boy'?)*

(Yes, that's why! Is there any problem?), Dixie replied.

«**Mandrew:** *(No, no, I can't!)*, he said while laughing out loud along with the group. *(They really are ridiculous).*

«**Melenky:** *(They both are ridiculous)*, he added, intruding into the scene. *(The dumb monkey was the same with us).*

>>>

(Let's see, girls, I need to ask you a question), Dixie told them calmly, showing a smile. (Have you already seen what time it is?)

Jemky (JENNY): *(Huh? And what does time have to do with it?) I don't even know what time it is!*

(Well, I don't know the time I asked you for your stupid opinion either!), Dixie exclaimed, earning a few murmurs from the others.

«**Jemky:** *(Ugh, this stupid one!)*

«**Mandrew:** *(You know what?! Just pull her hair!)*

>>>

«**Rocky:** *(That stupid monkey told us that we make him laugh. They make me laugh rather because they're pathetic and boring to play challenges!),* he said as they continued at the event along with some of the herd of kidnapped kong children, but without Diddy and Dixie present. *(Anyway, the challenges didn't work on us to make them fight).*

«**Melenky:** *(They are complete killjoys for those games).*

«**Mandrew:** *(Not even while we were playing, that dumb monkey dared).*

«**Jemky:** *(Look, and there's that idiot monkey),* he said, looking at Diddy in the distance, who was picking up some candies from the tables. *(Hmm...I want to have fun; let's see if this time he dares to be receptive to Jenny).*

«**Rocky:** *(Hey, are you going to keep insisting on that monkey? Because all this week you've been hinting at him and you've even tried to manipulate him with favors... and he doesn't seem to be interested in Jenny).*

«**Jemky:** *(I know he is, but he acts like he doesn't want to. That's how he was with Dixie)*, he said before directing 'Jenny' towards Diddy.

>>>

Jemky (JENNY): *(Hey, Diddy!)*, she called him while also taking a few sweets from the table. *(I haven't seen you for a while. I thought you had already left).*

Diddy just smiled at her a bit, but he didn't speak to her.

Jemky (JENNY): *(Hey, why are you so quiet?)*, she asked, nudging him lightly. *(Cute monkey)*, she whispered winking at him before leaving, but Diddy continued to ignore her.

«**Jemky:** *(Ugh, you know what?! Let's do something with that monkey: I'm going to look for him again, and if he doesn't give in, you guys go, act surprised, and tell everyone so they can tell Dixie and she'll believe it too... And if he does give in, we'll do it anyway, okay?... This time I will make him fall whether he likes it or not, you'll see!)*

«**Mandrew:** *(Are we going to make some kind of scandal with those two?... Sounds good!)*

«**Melenky:** *(Come on, I'll join too. After all, I want to do something fun here; I'm getting bored).*

>>>

Jemky (JENNY): *(Oh, Diddy, did you know you're a cute little monkey?)*, she told him while she had him cornered against a tree. *(You know? I've always thought that you-)*

(N-no, no, Jenny! Wait!), Diddy interrupted, freeing himself from her. *(See, I understand your intentions... but you're just my friend, just like Mandy, Ricky and Melvyn. And also, you have to remember that I have a girlfriend, and it's Dixie... And she's your friend too, and it's not right for you to act like that).*

Jemky (JENNY): *(Oh, so what?! I'm not jealous).*

(And Dixie neither!)

«**Jemky:** *(UGH, DON'T PRETEND, I know he likes Jenny!)*, he exclaimed as he forcefully cornered him again.

Jemky (JENNY): *(You know, Diddy? ... I've never thought about stealing. But... what if I steal a kiss from you?)*

(Hey, no, what's wrong with you?!), Diddy exclaimed, trying to get free from her.

>>>

«**Jemky:** *(What a rage with this MONKEY! Come, and just act surprised!)*

Jemky (JENNY): *(You're not leaving here until you kiss me!... Or I'll tell everyone that you're chasing me)*, she threatened him while she had him trapped.

Rocky (RICKY): *(HUH?! But what... does... this mean?!)*, he exclaimed, arriving with the group and pretending to be shocked.

(No, no, no!), Diddy exclaimed hurriedly, (It's not what you think! Jenny came and then-)

Melenky (MELVYN): *(I can't believe this! I never expected it!)*

Rocky (RICKY): *(Ahh, I see! So you finally decided to comply with the challenge and chose Jenny, right, Diddy?)*

Mandrew (MANDY): *(Wow, Jenny! I didn't know you liked other girl's boyfriends!)*

>>>

Mandrew (MANDY): *(Tell everyone that Diddy was cheating on Dixie with Jenny)*, he whispered to the other kong children, and they immediately spread the word.

Jemky (JENNY): *(Yeah, it's true, we kissed, he wanted to kiss me, say it's true!)*, he added in the same way.

"Urgh, this burnt-annatto-faced!" Diddy grumbled, watching that scene.

(What happened what?!), the children in the crowd asked. (What are you saying?! Diddy was cheating on Dixie with Jenny?)

(What?! Hey, no, that's not true!), Diddy exclaimed.

>>>

«**Rocky:** *(Look, the monkeys want to leave!)*, he exclaimed, seeing Diddy and Dixie trying to get out from the crowd.

«**Jemky:** *(No! Don't let them go, make them fight!... I know what to say; play along with me).*

Jemky (JENNY): *(Wait, wait a minute! I have to clarify one thing: it was Diddy who came to me!)*

(WHAT?! Hey, don't lie, that wasn't like that!), Diddy replied, returning in front of them along with Dixie.

Jemky (JENNY): *(Don't pretend to be crazy, Diddy! You were who insisted on me! You are always who chases me!)*

(Hey, what's wrong with you, Jenny?! I didn't even want to find you!)

>>>

(Wait a minute, please!), Dixie interrupted firmly. *(Take this however you will, but you, Jenny, are the one who is lying!)*

Jemky (JENNY): *(Me?! You're crazy! And don't tell me you believe your boyfriend!)*

(Well, yes! And besides, I've noticed that sometimes you act strangely with him or try to get close to him! So that's why I can believe him!)

«**Melenky:** *(No, no, please, how ridiculous!)*, he said as they laughed even out loud along with the group.

«**Mandrew:** *(Oh, yeah, look how she believes that stupid monkey!)*

«**Jemky:** *(Keep going, we have to make them look bad! Especially that idiotic monkey!)*

>>>

(Hey, wait a minute!), Diddy exclaimed. (For your information: I have noticed Jenny's intentions and I have always told Dixie about it! So, Dixie is not crazy!)

«**Jemky:** *(Urgh, these IDIOTS make us look bad!)*

«**Rocky:** *(And now what do we tell them?!)*

«**Jemky:** *(Ahhh, I don't know! You know what?! Let's go against those fools right now!)*

(HEY! What's wrong with you?!), Dixie exclaimed, pushing 'Jenny' away when she started pulling her hair.

Jemky (JENNY): *(Well, you want to fight, right?! So, let's do it!)*

(At no moment did I say I wanted to fight you, Jenny!), Dixie stated defending herself.

«**Jemky:** *(Mandrew, come defend Jenny!)*

Mandrew (MANDY): *(What's wrong with you?! Don't pull Jenny's hair!), she exclaimed, joining the fight.*

(But she started!), Dixie replied.

«**Mandrew:** *(Rocky! Melenky! Take charge of that monkey!), he exclaimed when Diddy tried to separate them.*

Rocky (RICKY): *(Hey, don't mess with Jenny and Mandy, huh!), he headed with 'Melvyn' to confront Diddy.*

>>>

«**Rocky:** *(URGH, DARN, MY ARM! He almost broke my real arm!)*

(Oh, I'm sorry, Ricky!), Diddy exclaimed, alarmed and heading to him after the confrontation. (S-sorry, I didn't want to-)

Rocky (RICKY): *(Let me! This is your fault!), he interrupted, pushing him with his other arm.*

>>>

(We only told you things like they are!), Dixie replied.

(That's true!), added Diddy. (You did not agree to end this discussion and only responded by attacking!)

(SO, GET OUT OF HERE!), the four yelled at them, pushing them out of the crowd.

(WELL, WELL, SO, GOODBYE!), Diddy yelled.

>>>

«**Rocky:** *(To those idiot monkeys I really want to kidnap them by force like Jemky said at the beginning!), he exclaimed while they were adjusting Ricky's arm. (Now we have to repair Ricky's stupid arm too!)*

«**Melenky:** *(I take back what I said! I still hate them and I'll continue to do so!)*

«**Mandrew:** *(I just wait for the day to come when the boat is ready to take that pair of chumps away too... 'And that's why I can believe Diddy'), he added, imitating Dixie's voice.*

«**Jemky:** *(And the worst thing is that that monkey agreed with her because he says he tells her all. Who is stupid enough to tell his girlfriend that someone else is hitting on him? Those things shouldn't be told!)*

«**Rocky:** *(Although Dixie doesn't look that angry about it... Knowing how she is for a fight, she would have already torn Jenny to pieces long ago).*

«**Jemky:** *(I hate them! And that cowardly monkey is another one! It's assumed that if a girl flirts with a boy, they accept her without thinking about it! And even more so if she's a girl like Jenny! How is it possible that he doesn't fall for a girl like Jenny?! Jenny is so pretty).*

«**Melenky:** *(Well, that stupid monkey looks very much in love with his girlfriend, I don't even see that he's attracted to at least some of the girls we have kidnapped, and I chose the prettiest ones for him for the challenge when we were playing).*

«**Mandrew:** *(Anyway, at least the fight we had with that pair was good. I had never fought like girls).*

«**Rocky:** *(Yeah, but those two fools humiliated us anyway).*

«**Jemky:** *(Ugh, but why doesn't that monkey fall into? The boys we kidnapped did fall with Jenny! At most they fell into the second attempt to catch them).*

>>> "Day 65. The monkeys didn't go to work and we had to go and apologize"

«**Mandrew:** *(Oh, do we really have to do this?), he complained as they were under Mr. Pinky's house.*

«**Rocky:** *(If they haven't gone today to continue with the ship, it's because they must have been angry with what happened yesterday, and we can't lose them... Not because we care about them, but because we have to kidnap them).*

«**Jemky:** *(Here they come down! Put on repentant faces).*

(Hello), Diddy and Dixie greeted them coldly.

(Uhh... hi?), the four replied simultaneously and with forced smiles.

«**Mandrew:** *(So... who speaks first? I'll talk next).*

Melenky (MELVYN): *(Excuse us!), he pronounced quickly.*

Mandrew (MANDY): *(Uhh... hey... It's that we wanted to tell you that... we're really... sorry. We haven't seen you all day and... we assumed you were mad at us, so we decided to come and see you and... we wanted to apologize if we gave you a bad time last night).*

>>>

(And what bothered us the most was all the fuss you made us go through in front of everyone), Dixie commented to them. (We were about to leave and not argue with you in public, but then Jenny came out...)

«**Rocky:** *(Yeah, yeah, yeah, shut up and go back to work, monkeys!)*, he said as they listened to what Diddy and Dixie told them.

«**Jemky:** *(Anyway, answer them according to what they tell us).*

"We would have sent them packing at that moment!" Dixie expressed indignantly when she saw how they had wasted words with that quartet.

>>>

Jemky (JENNY): *(Dixie, I... I'm really sorry. Sorry for having been like that), 'she' told her when 'she' was talking to Dixie alone.*

(I know, Jenny... and don't worry, I don't want to fight with you if that's what you think... Just tell me one thing, and I would like you to be honest with me: you... you like Diddy, right?)

Jemky (JENNY): *(Well... what could I tell you? ... Actually, yes), she said, pretending in a tone and a look of regret. (Since always, since we met you two and I saw him... But I didn't know at first that you two were dating. I'm sorry...)*

>>>

«**Jemky:** *(I swear I thought she was going to fight with Jenny).*

Jemky (JENNY): *(Wow, Dixie... you're so kind with me... Oh, I don't deserve a friend like you; you've been so good with me and I just failed you trying to steal your boyfriend and wanting to fight with you. I'm an idiot).*

(No, don't say that, Jenny), Dixie replied, (I really forgive you, but as I said: I hope you are also apologizing seriously. And also... I don't want you to feel bad because of us; you're very pretty, and I know that one day you could also find someone who loves you very much... And if you don't find it, you can still be very happy).

Jemky (JENNY): *(Oh... I thank you, Dixie. Thank you for understanding me... You're really a good friend, and now I just want us to stay this way... And yes, I promise I won't do that to Diddy anymore, don't worry about me... Can I give you a hug?)*

(Okay, Jenny), Dixie replied before hugging her back.

«**Jemky:** *(Oh, why are you so beautiful, Dixie?), he said in a tender tone, before grumbling again. (And why do you have to be with that stupid monkey Diddy and not me?!)*

>>>

Melenky (MELVYN): *(Why don't we all give each other a group hug?), he said excitedly before hugging the six of them.*

Rocky (RICKY): *(We promise not to fight again, okay?)*

(Okay!), they all said before bumping their hands together. (For our friendship!)

Mandrew (MANDY): *(So... will you return tomorrow to continue with the ship?)*

(Of course!), Diddy and Dixie replied.

"What a nerve with those four idiots!" Diddy commented looking at the scene and how those apologies had all been in vain.

>>> *"Day 70. Another day"*

Mandrew (MANDY): *(Uhh... I got it! Why don't you clean up the debris in the cabins?)*

(Isn't there... anything else to do?), Dixie asked. (Is there nothing else to do about building this ship?)

Rocky (RICKY): *(Yes, but don't worry, the other kids will), he replied before leaving.*

«**Rocky:** *(I'm tired of being 'friends' with those two. I don't know what else to do with them, I'm already bored).*

«**Melenky:** *(We're almost done, don't worry. As soon as we sail the ship, we'll kidnap them there and they won't even notice).*

«**Jemky:** *(Hey, I'm getting bored too, I need to do something fun with that pair... Hmm, let's see if the monkey falls into this time).*

«**Rocky:** *(That monkey?), he said, giving some mocking laughs. (Hey, that monkey doesn't fall at Jenny's feet even with spells... You're not thinking about going to bother him now, are you? Just leave him, it's not going to work for you).*

«**Jemky:** *(Trust me, I'll get it this time and I'll get Dixie to break up with him. Anyway, that monkey tells Dixie everything, by law he'll tell her that something happened to him with Jenny, and then Dixie will get angry).*

>>>

«**Jemky:** *(Ugh, this monkey doesn't fall into. DARN IT!)*

(Let me!), Diddy exclaimed, trying to free himself while 'Jenny' had him imprisoned against the stairs of one of the cabins.

Jemky (JENNY): *(Urgh, don't be a coward!), she exclaimed, holding him tighter. (Now you'll kiss me, monkey).*

(Stop it, Jenny! I don't love you that way!), Diddy exclaimed after pushing her away abruptly.

«**Jemky:** *(This STUPID COWARD MONKEY!)*, he exclaimed as he slapped him and pushed him against the stairs.

(JENNY!), Dixie appeared, immediately coming down to them. *(What are you doing to Diddy?)*

«**Jemky:** *(Oh, darn).*

Jemky (JENNY): *(Uhh... Hi, Dixie! I'm sorry!)*, she said before pushing the two of them, but Dixie stopped her.

(Wait a minute, Jenny!), Dixie exclaimed holding her. *(Listen to me! I can tolerate you throwing all the flowers you want at Diddy, but never hurting him, much less hitting him!)*

«**Jemky:** *(Yeah, yeah, anyway)*, he said before pushing Dixie away and leaving the place. *(Oh, how I hate that pair!)*

«**Rocky:** *(I told you).*

«**Jemky:** *(But don't think that this will stay like this... I'll make them break up!)*

>>> "Day 71. Wrench trap to that stupid monkey"

«**Rocky:** *(And are you sure you'll get to make him fall that way? Definitely, that monkey doesn't have the slightest intention of even wanting to hold Jenny's hand).*

«**Jemky:** *(I said this time he'll fall into whether he likes it or not! You two just act as naturally as you can with that wrench).*

«**Melenky:** *(Yeah, this will be fun; this way, Dixie will break up with him no matter what).*

>>>

Rocky (RICKY): *(Wait a minute, this is not the right wrench)*, he stated, taking the wrench that 'Melvyn' used to make some adjustments to the helm. *(The wrench we need here is bigger).*

Melenky (MELVYN): *(Well, that's the only one I've seen today).*

Rocky (RICKY): *(Ah, yes, I think I remember I left it there)*, he pointed to a path through the trees. *(Hey, Diddy, could you go get it, please? It's the other wrench we use, the one that is bigger).*

(Are you sure you left it there?), Diddy questioned.

Rocky (RICKY): *(Yes, while we were adjusting some masts, I dropped it there. Go, it's not that far; just search in that area. Meanwhile, here we'll continue adjusting the other screws).*

«**Mandrew:** *(What a good excuse).*

«**Melenky:** *(Oh, I need to see how this ends).*

>>>

«**Jemky:** *(Now! Head Dixie!)*, he said while he had 'Jenny' hidden behind the trees and watched Diddy from there, who was looking for that wrench, which 'Jenny' had in her hands.

Melenky (MELVYN): *(Diddy isn't taking long, by the way?)*, he said as an excuse to go get him.

Rocky (RICKY): *(Hey, it's true, why don't we go help him look for the wrench too?... Come if you want too, Dixie).*

"I was already saying: how did they synchronize perfectly?" Diddy commented, looking at that scene, all indignant.

«**Melenky:** *(We already are arriving!)*

«**Jemky:** *(Here we go! You won't be saved from this, little monkey)*, he said with an evil laugh as he threw the wrench near one of the trees. *(This time I won't make Jenny stand in front of him, but rather HE will be in front of her so that Dixie will believe this time that her boyfriend is the one who kissed Jenny and so she'll break up with him once and for all!)*

«**Rocky:** *(He already took the wrench! Now!)*

That scene was shown, where 'Jenny' hit Diddy on the head and then stole a kiss from him, and in which Dixie appeared to see that image.

Diddy, while watching that scene on the screen, just wanted to leave the room to find the four of them at that very moment and beat them up.

(B-but what?!), Diddy exclaimed, looking alarmed, before immediately pushing 'Jenny' away.

(DIDDY?!), exclaimed Dixie, who had been made to arrive at the right time.

(B-but how-?!)

Jemky (JENNY): *(What? You said let's kiss, didn't you, Diddy?)*

>>>

(Hey, NO! What's wrong with you, Jenny?! What did you do?! You really don't understand anything?!)

Jemky (JENNY): *(Oh, I'm sorry!)*, she replied with a sarcastic smile.

(What happened here?!), exclaimed one of the kidnapped kong children, arriving with the rest to look around.

«**Mandrew:** *(Hey, it seems that this time it worked for us)*, he commented as they watched Diddy leave the crowd.

«**Jemky:** *(I told you it would work no matter what!)*, he added in a tone of excitement. *(Tomorrow when they come, we'll see if they broke up or not).*

"Urgh, darn them!" Diddy grumbled, looking at the scene.

>>> "Day 72 . The monkeys didn't break up"

«**Rocky:** *(Does the ship still need more adjustments?)*

«**Mandrew:** *(Yes, but that's practically ready, now let's have some fun with all these kids. Aren't you tired now?)*

«**Melenky:** *(Here comes Diddy!... And apparently, he doesn't come with Dixie)*, he said as they saw Diddy arrive.

>>>

Rocky (RICKY): *(Yeah, so today is for celebration!)*, he said before giving Diddy a little push. *(Come on, stay with us today! By the way... where's Dixie? Ah, don't tell me that-).*

(She didn't come), Diddy interrupted, suppressing his urge to yell at them.

Melenky (MELVYN): *(Oh... because of yesterday's event, right? Are you two on bad terms or something?)*

(It's none of your business!), Diddy exclaimed, raising his voice a little.

Rocky (RICKY): *(Hey! Calm down, buddy!)*, he replied with a laugh. *(You'll fix it, and if not, you know... there are many girls in the world).*

«**Jemky:** *(So... did we get them to break up?)*, he asked in an excited tone.

«**Mandrew:** *(Apparently, yes...)*

>>>

(Urgh! It's all your fault, Jenny!), Diddy said, raising his voice. *(You don't care about Dixie, you don't understand anything, you chase me every chance you can, and with what you did yesterday you crossed the line, seriously! And not only you. Ricky, Melvyn and Mandy are also planning everything, you all want to separate Dixie and me! You are fakes-)*

Jemky (JENNY): *(Hey, calm down! It was a single kiss, are you going to tell me you didn't like it?)*

(Urgh, Jenny! You just treat me as if I were a toy; you think you have the right to do whatever you want with me, but no-)

Jemky (JENNY): *(Hey, hey, wait a minute! Look, Diddy, I have only one thing to tell you: you're going to meet a lot of girls better than Dixie someday. So, it's absurd that you're just fallen for one girl and-)*

(Wait, Jenny! I also have something to tell you before you repeat the same thing to me as Ricky and Melvyn: Get your own boyfriend first!)

«**Jemky:** *(Ugh, this monkey always has something to answer!)*, he exclaimed after giving him a couple of slaps through 'Jenny'.

>>>

«**Rocky:** *(Melenky, that monkey is not going to dare that challenge, much less with what happened last night).*

(Okay, I accept the challenge!), Diddy announced, smiling firmly.

«Rocky: *(W-what did he say?!)*

Rocky (RICKY): *(Are you serious, Diddy?)*

(Well, yes), Diddy replied, looking determined.

«Mandrew: *(This has to be a joke, that's not Diddy).*

Melenky (MELVYN): *(Well... if you say so), he said, smiling. (Now choose which of the girls you'll kiss).*

(Jenny!), he pointed at her, earning yells of curiosity from the rest of the children.

«Rocky: *(WHAT?!)*

«Mandrew: *(Did he just say Jenny?!)*

«Jemky: *(Wait, wait, wait!... So, it means we got them to break up?!)*

Mandrew (MANDY): *(Are you okay, Diddy?)*

Jemky (JENNY): *(Do you really plan to do it, Diddy? I haven't told you anything now).*

(Yes, Jenny, isn't that what you wanted from me?), Diddy replied. (Now come here).

«Jemky: *(We did it...), he said sounding surprised, before speaking with excitement. (WE DID IT! So those two dumb dwarves finally broke up!)*

(Well, Jenny, now close your eyes), Diddy told her in a mischievous tone in front of 'Jenny'.

Jemky (JENNY): *(Okay), she replied with a shrug and a smile.*

And it was at that moment that Diddy grabbed his cup of the fruit juice and poured it on Jenny's face. There was even a distortion effect on the image on her screen.

Jemky (JENNY): *(URGH, STUPID MONKEY!), he shouted this time loudly and without pretense.*

«Rocky: *(THIS SCOUNDREL!)*

Rocky (RICKY): *(HEY, YOU HAVE TO RESPECT JENNY!), he exclaimed as Diddy ran out.*

Melenky (MELVYN): *(COME BACK HERE!)*

«Jemky: *(THIS MONKEY FACED- AHHH, DARN-)*

Apparently, because the fruit juice was a liquid, it caused some damage to Jenny's mechanism, even causing flashes of distortion and even audio glitches to appear on that subscreen.

>>>

«Jemky: *(You're going to pay me, Diddy... YOU'RE GOING TO PAY ME, YOU DARN STUPID MONKEY!), he grumbled while the other three kids were making some adjustments and repairs to*

'Jenny'.

«**Mandrew:** *(I was already saying how that cowardly monkey had accepted that challenge! And he got away with it!)*

«**Rocky:** *(It seems that it's ready)*, he said before the image on Jenny's subscreen returned to normal. *(Can you see through your screen again, Jemky?)*

«**Jemky:** *(Yes, it's okay... And luckily it was fixed).*

«**Melenky:** *(Hey, I don't know about you, but I think that pair didn't break up).*

«**Jemky:** *(Darn, stupid monkeys... Or maybe they did break up but that chump monkey is still pretending not to want Jenny).*

«**Mandrew:** *(What if we go spy on them or something? I'm dying of curiosity).*

>>>

«**Rocky:** *(Hmm, no... looks like they didn't break up)*, he said while they spied on the moment when Diddy and Dixie were fixing things between the two of them.

(No, no, you don't have to apologize for that, Diddy... It really wasn't your fault, it's not), Dixie could be heard saying in the distance. *(I know it was Jenny, she did it. And it's just Jenny... I came to consider her a lot, as a good friend... But I don't think I'll see her like that anymore...)*

"What?! Were they spying on us at that time?!" Dixie exclaimed, looking at the scene with indignation.

(Oh, Dixie... I think I understand how you feel anyways), Diddy could be heard saying. *(I've felt that way too, you know, because of... Jemky...)*

«**Jemky:** *(And in what matter is that monkey mentioning me?)*

>>>

(What are you saying?), Diddy asked Dixie. *(I don't understand, what are you talking about?)*

(It's that... the time you invited me to the waterfalls... I had made a stupid deal with Jemky... to pretend that we were dating and so you would be encouraged to confess to me).

«**Jemky:** *(W-what did she say?)*

>>>

(Then I felt very bad for having accepted that, and I could notice the next night that you looked discouraged because of me, and that's why I told you that the next day we could go to the waterfalls again. That time, I even was going to confess to you that I liked you... But everything turned out worse).

«**Jemky:** *(But just listen to what she's telling him... just now).*

«**Melenky:** *(Ha! If they knew that we're here listening to everything).*

>>>

(That day was terrible, I just got home, greeted them all there and locked myself in my room. I didn't sleep at all that night, I only had in my mind the vivid image of Jemky after I shot him... just like in my nightmares I've had about him).

«Jemky: *(Ahhh, thanks for reminding me, stupid! If I almost fell asleep forever for I don't know how many times).*

>>>

(I wish I had stayed like this with you on DK Island), Diddy said while hugging Dixie. (I can't wait for the day when we can return and.... fix everything for real).

(So do I... There isn't a day that I don't think about DK Island...)

«Jemky: *(Urgh, blast! Those two DIDN'T BREAK UP! I hate them, I HATE THEM! So even because the monkey kissed Jenny, that chimp girl didn't break up with him?! So, if that idiot monkey really cheats on her, she's still going to believe him that it's not true?!)*

«Rocky: *(To heck with it all! That pair of ridiculous little monkeys in love doesn't even break up with any witchcraft!)*

«Mandrew: *(Maybe they'll break up someday! Somehow it'll happen!)*

«Jemky: *(No way! We have to think of a new plan to make them break up!)*

«Melenky: *(Hey, can you guys be quiet for a while?! I didn't hear what they said just now).*

(... about we tell them we won't go with them?), Dixie had said that they would no longer go on that ship, but the quartet didn't hear them.

>>> *"Day 73. The friendship with that pair ended"*

«Jemky: *(If with this they don't break up, it means they really are a couple of stupid lovers), he said while making a declaration of love poster on a banana leaf, in his last attempt to make Diddy and Dixie break up.*

«Melenky: *(Wait, wait! Here comes Dixie), he said on the other hand as they saw Dixie approaching.*

«Mandrew: *(Oh, no, that wasn't the plan, we were supposed to go see her and tell her that Diddy is with Jenny).*

>>>

(By the way), Dixie told them. (Now I'm going to have a date with Diddy. He told me he had a surprise prepared for me, so I came to ask you if... could you accompany me? Oh, and that I'll also take your old friends).

«Mandrew: *(One moment! What did she say?... B-but that's exactly what we had planned).*

>>>

(Hi, Jenny!), Diddy exclaimed on the other hand.

«**Jemky:** *(And what is this monkey doing here too?!)*

Jemky (JENNY): *(Diddy! W-what are you doing around here?)*, she asked with confusion.

(I was just passing by), he replied before snatching the ropes she was carrying. *(Hey, what are these for? Are you... maybe thinking of kidnapping someone?)*

Jemky (JENNY): *(W-what?! What are you talking about?)*, 'she' asked, trying to take the ropes from Diddy, but Diddy wouldn't let her.

«**Jemky:** *(But how did he guess?!)*

>>>

(Oh, yes, of course I love her. But... I was thinking and... I feel like I love you too, Jenny, even much more than Dixie. You're really cute. So... why don't we give ourselves a chance? And let neither Dixie nor anyone else know).

«**Jemky:** *(He might be kidding... Or has he already changed his mind?)*

Jemky (JENNY): *(Are you really saying that, Diddy?... Well, if you say so... you know I don't have any problems)*, she added, getting closer to Diddy. *(You know how long I've waited for you).*

(Uhh, yeah, yeah, of course I'm serious, Jenny), Diddy replied with a forced smile and trying to move away.

Jemky (JENNY): *(Okay, Diddy. So... how about we kiss now?)*

(Wait, wait! Not yet!), Diddy said, immediately moving away from her. *(It's just... We can't kiss if you and I are still nothing).*

>>>

«**Jemky:** *(One moment, one moment! How did he know about the stupid poster?!)*

(Jenny...), Diddy uttered while holding that poster and heading towards 'Jenny'. *(I wanted to ask you to... be my-)*

(DIDDY! WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?!), Dixie exclaimed when she arrived.

(Uhh... no, no, no, Dixie, this is not what it seems!), Diddy exclaimed, pretending to be alarmed and immediately standing up.

«**Melenky:** *(Looks like it worked! IT WORKED!)*

(Could you explain this to me, DIDDY?!), Dixie exclaimed, pretending to be furious.

(No, no, it's not what you think, Dixie! See... I was just-)

>>>

«**Rocky:** *(Looks like it finally worked for us!)*, he said excitedly as they watched Diddy and Dixie arguing.

«**Jemky:** *(GOOD! Finally, we did it, we did it!... I'll need to watch this moment again and again when we get the video cassettes ready!)*

(No, I was just rehearsing with her to tell you later!), Diddy exclaimed.

(I don't want your excuses, Diddy! Y-you said you only loved me! This is over, YOU ARE A FAKE ONE!)

«**Mandrew:** *(This is better than a TV show!)*, he said while laughing.

(But... do you know who the fake ones really are?), Diddy said, smiling confidently.

(Them!), exclaimed Diddy and Dixie, pointing to the quartet.

(What?!), the four exclaimed, looking at them confused at all.

«**Rocky:** *(SAY WHAT?!)*

(Yes, you! You are fake ones!), Diddy exclaimed. *(You who claim to be our 'friends'!)*

(Ha! You fell into it!), Dixie added. *(Did you think we didn't know anything about what you all planned to do to us now?! So, take that!)*

«**Jemky:** *(No, no, no, DARN! Act clueless!)*

Rocky (RICKY): *(Hey, wait, wait, what are you two talking about?! We had no plan against you!)*

(Don't pretend!), Diddy replied. *(We ourselves heard you all yesterday talking about us and this plan you wanted to make to try to separate us again!)*

«**Jemky:** *(NO, darn it! How did they hear us?!)*

>>>

(Not at all! It's all true!), Diddy exclaimed, pointing to them. *(The four of you wanted to take us for fools! Starting with Jenny!)*

Jemky (JENNY): *(Well, but anyway, you recently said you loved me and would give me a chance. And that Dixie wouldn't find out).*

(I told him to tell you that, Jenny), Dixie replied in a mocking tone. *(It was part of our plan to ruin yours, with which you wanted to separate us again!)*

«**Jemky:** *(OH, DARN! They always get away with it!)*

«**Mandrew:** *(But how the heck did they hear us?! They're saying exactly the same thing we said about them!)*

>>>

(Well, at least we had never spoken ill of you!), replied Dixie. (Wow! Are you that way with your old friends too?)

Jemky (JENNY): *(URGH, SHUT UP! I don't know what you're talking about! But we haven't spoken ill of you either! YOU ARE CRAZY!)*

Rocky (RICKY): *(You know what?! We better finish this discussion!), he said, heading with the group towards Diddy and Dixie. (So, do you want to fight with us?! Because that's what I'm understanding!)*

(Oops, stay still!), Diddy replied mockingly, walking away with Dixie from them. (We never told you we were going to fight, just to tell you your truths).

(CATCH THEM!), the four exclaimed, trying to pounce on the two, but they dodged them and ran away.

>>>

«**Mandrew:** *(Do we really have to do this again?), he complained as they headed to Mr. Pinky's house to apologize again.*

«**Rocky:** *(Hey... it's not that we care about them, but I think we've crossed the line a bit and they must already be quite disappointed in us, even more so now that they found us out talking about them like that... and we can't lose them if we also want to kidnap them to our dads' experiment).*

«**Jemky:** *(I still believe in forcibly kidnapping them and that's it).*

«**Rocky:** *(No! You know they can defend themselves, and these four mechanized kids are quite fragile to blows. What's more, you're lucky that Dixie didn't want to beat Jenny up because you made her kiss her boyfriend).*

>>>

Rocky (RICKY): *(U-uh... Hey, no! What are you saying?... We didn't have the intention of no longer being friends with the two of you... We just wanted to apologize, that's all).*

Mandrew (MANDY): *(Please, we don't want to hate you. I know we did wrong, we were fools, but we didn't want you to take it that way either).*

(Oh, come on), Diddy replied. (Don't you realize that all along you've wanted Dixie and me to fight? Aren't you going to tell me that you speak ill of us to all your old friends?)

(And I'm not saying we're going to hate each other), Dixie continued, (that sounds like fighting, and it's not that I want that either. Simply... we won't hang around with you as before. And well... I hope you'll do well... That's all we have to tell you).

«**Rocky:** *(Don't let them go, darn it! BEG THEM OR SOMETHING! Make sad faces!)*

>>>

Melenky (MELVYN): *(Hey, no!), he exclaimed, stopping them along with the other three kids as they continued to beg for forgiveness. (Please don't leave. We'll be better with you, we promise).*

Mandrew (MANDY): *(Don't leave us, you're our friends!... And we made the ship for you).*

Jemky (JENNY): *(Dixie... Do you want to talk?),* she asked Dixie, holding her arm, but she only ignored her.

Rocky (RICKY): *(Please forgive us!)*

(Hey, please, enough is enough), Diddy replied, calming them down. *(Please understand that it's not. With everything you did, this has no fix).*

>>>

«**Jemky:** *(Let's just catch them by force!)*, he replied as they walked away from the house and looked at Diddy and Dixie from afar, after failing with their apologies.

«**Melenky:** *(I think the same, otherwise we lose them!)*

«**Rocky:** *(No! They'll come out hitting us and then the entire mission will have failed).*

«**Mandrew:** *(Or if you want, Jemky and I will go; we're controlling the girls; they won't attack Jenny and Mandy).*

«**Rocky:** *(But Dixie is a girl too, at least she will do it!)*, he replied when they were further from the house and stopped between the trees. *(Urgh, anyway! You know what? When our dads return, we'll tell them to take over those two; they're bigger and stronger, and they'll even kidnap them at gunpoint; that pair won't be saved from that).*

«**Jemky:** *(Are you crazy?! I don't think our dads want to kidnap some specific monkeys when we already have forty more ones kidnapped).*

«**Rocky:** *(Well, we let them lose then!)*

«**Melenky:** *(No, not like that either! There still have to be alternatives to catch them...)*

«**Rocky:** *(Or I would say that we make them break up so that they would be easier to kidnap, but that is no longer possible even with witchcraft).*

>>>

«**Rocky:** *(Hey, why do you want to keep spying on those two fools? Come on, we can't leave that whole herd of children alone),* he said as they were now spied on near the post office on Hurricane Island.

«**Mandrew:** *(Oh, we just want to see what they do! Just relax!)*

«**Melenky:** *(And what is that pair doing at the post office?)*

(Are you sure about that, Dixie?), Diddy was heard telling Dixie. *(What if they don't arrive on DK Island?)*

(But we won't lose anything by trying. Come on, you can write to Donkey. I'll write to Tiny, Kiddy and Chunky).

(Well... Maybe I can. Did you bring the sheets?)

«**Jemky:** *(They just want to send letters to their herd on DK Island, that's all).*

>>>

(Well, little monkeys. In a couple of hours, the swordfish will come and we'll give them your letters), the apes at the post office said, after sealing the letters. (But you know, the letters could arrive as well as they may not).

«**Rocky:** *(Hmm, as if they were really going to return to their island), he commented in a mocking tone as they spied on them behind the trees.*

«**Jemky:** *(And they'll really return to DK Island if we don't do anything!)*

«**Rocky:** *(I already said that we can't take that risk of forcibly catching them! But we'll tell our dads to do it!)*

>>> "Day 74. The day of their stupid date"

«**Mandrew:** *(These can serve us, at least to reinforce that broken mast), he said while they were collecting some vines, before focusing on 'Ricky'. (And all because SOMEONE thought to get it readjusted with one of the clumsiest kids we have in the herd).*

«**Rocky:** *(Huh, but I remind you that yesterday you decided to continue spying on that pair of pathetic monkeys and we left these kidnapped kids alone to get into problems!)*

«**Melenky:** *(Hey, hey, hey! Hide, it's Dixie!)*

«**Rocky:** *(What?!), he exclaimed before turning and realizing that Dixie was nearby. (Oh, it's true!)*

The quartet immediately hid behind the bushes while they saw Dixie wandering around the place where they were: she was carrying a wooden painting in her hands while she was collecting some fallen colored leaves that were on the ground and then placing them in that painting.

«**Mandrew:** *(And now what is she doing?), he said, trying to look at what she was doing on the painting.*

«**Melenky:** *(Ah, it seems like it's just a little figure with colored leaves... and some branches... and some stones... that are shaped like trees... and some hearts? Oh, and those stones are shaped like her and that monkey... Is that a gift she's making to him?*

«**Jemky:** *(Is seriously?! Let's see!), he said, also hurrying to see what Dixie was doing. (And she also gives gifts to that stupid monkey?)*

«**Mandrew:** *(I think they must be planning something... What if we follow them? Come on, let's go!)*

«**Rocky:** *(Hey, are you serious?! It's fun to annoy those monkeys, but I'm not interested in their lives to always spy on them!)*

«**Melenky:** *(Don't be boring, Rocky, come on!)*

>>>

“Ugh, do they esteem us so much as for spying on us all time?!” Dixie exclaimed, rolling her eyes as she looked at the scene that showed the last date she had with Diddy.

«**Rocky:** *(Definitely... those two are indestructible).*

«**Mandrew:** *(Hey, those two might not even break their relationship with spells).*

(Really, Diddy, you always manage to make me smile on these things), Dixie told Diddy under the willow tree.

(And I'm always glad when you smile), Diddy replied, taking her hair subtly.

«**Jemky:** *(I hate you... blasted monkeys... I hate you),* he muttered as if he were about to explode in fury.

>>>

(Dix... I wanted to tell you that... I really thank you for all the good times we've had... And about the not-so-good times, I'm also glad we were able to fix them).

(Oh, Diddy... I thank you too... and I want us to stay together when we go back to DK Island... And I want us to be forever. You don't know how happy you've made me).

«**Melenky:** *(Yeah, yeah, the things you say when you're in love),* he said in a mocking tone.

«**Mandrew:** *(You also talked that way to your ex-girlfriend... and she left you for three other ones at the same time),* he added before laughing.

«**Melenky:** *(Shut up! Don't make me remind you that yours cheated on you with someone uglier than you).*

«**Mandrew:** *(Urgh, worm-faced!),* he replied while Melenky was now laughing. Then he focused back the camera on Diddy and Dixie. *(Oh, look, those two are already smooching again... Huh? Hey, Jemky... are you cry-)*

«**Jemky:** *(No, of course not!),* he replied with a brittle voice and as if he wanted to explode with fury.

«**Rocky:** *(Hey, brother, calm down... Someday those two are going to break up and you'll have a chance with Dixie again... Oh, wait, right, we're going to kidnap them for our dads' experiment and-)*

«**Jemky:** *(AAHHHH, how I hate those two DARN MONKEYS!),* he exclaimed so loudly that even the audio of the video recording sounded grating. *(I wish... I HOPE that couple of pathetic monkeys BREAK UP TOMORROW!)*

«**Rocky:** *(Hey, but anyway, we're also going to take them to our dads for the mechanization experiment, and then-)*

«**Jemky:** *(NO, because I wasn't going to allow them to do that to Dixie! I was even thinking about rescuing her and freeing her from them so that she would love me! But if she loves that dumb monkey, then I hope those two die AND GET THEIR CORPSES MECHANIZED! I HATE THEM!)*

DARN COUPLE OF RIDICULOUS MONKEYS! Why is that stupid chimp fascinated by that TRIPLE-HEADED DWARF DUMB MONKE-)

«Melenky: (Hey, hey, hey, Dixie is not the only girl in the world; you can get any girl you want, have you already forgotten all your girlfriends you had?... Even if they have all broken up with you).

«Jemky: (Don't remind me of that!... Urgh, but I swear, I SWEAR that I myself will take over doing that procedure ON THOSE TWO STUPID MONKEYS!)

«Mandrew: (Jemky, you're already exaggerating; our dads are not going to teach us to mechanize yet; we don't even know what the process is like... Hey, but don't cry, it was obvious that Dixie would end up being with that dumb monkey Didd-)

«Jemky: (I'm not crying!), he replied as he could be heard inhaling sharply as he finished speaking. (Oh, no, no, no! This can't stay like this, there must still be a way to make them break up!)

«Melenky: (To make them break up? Hmm, even witchcraft wouldn't work on those two... nor with Jenny, nor making the monkey kiss with Jenny, nor even with traps, and I even think that if we set cheating tricks for Diddy to make him break up with Dixie... it wouldn't work either).

«Jemky: (Wait!), he said, changing his tone. (Did you just say... Hmm... Maybe, maybe).

«Rocky: (Hey, you don't want to try something new with those two, do you?)

«Jemky: (Hmm, I don't know... Or maybe... there is still an alternative...)

>>>

«Rocky: (No, no, no! No way! I don't participate in something like that, Jemky), he said as they were back with the herd of kidnapped kong children.

«Mandrew: (Me neither! We're not going to expose ourselves that way; Someone can discover us).

«Jemky: (Nothing will happen; we'll do that and leave immediately so those two don't catch us).

«Rocky: (But our dads could find out and they'll give us the beating of our lives!... Besides, I bet you that won't work either; the relationship of that pair is unbreakable.

«Jemky: (Are you sure? Well, see: Dixie JUST told Diddy yesterday about the deal I made for her to make him jealous that time. She mentioned that we asked for his pyramid and about the time she shot me... They even think I'm dead. What's more, we know a lot of information about them in recent months; if we mention any of that information to them... Diddy will have too difficult believing it's a lie; he even told Dixie that it bothers him that she couldn't tell him things right before: we can make her look like a liar!)

«Mandrew: (And will that monkey believe a fake letter? I mean... he might know Dixie's handwriting perfectly).

«Jemky: (Don't worry about that... I still have the pyramid instructions that she wrote for me; I can forge her handwriting easily... We can even steal that stamp at that post office for a while so it looks like a real letter, and even one of those maps. Anyway, it's not the first time I've made a fake letter to break up a couple of fools in love).

"That stupid orangutan," Diddy muttered, so furious, listening to the video recording, at the same time remembering what happened.

«**Melenky:** *(Hey!)*, he exclaimed, apparently reaching the room, since a door was heard closing in the background. Our dads called; they say they're coming here to leave some devices and materials for the mechanization of those children. Oh, and they want us to let them see that we've caught all kids and that the ship is ready.

«**Rocky:** *(The children are all captured. The ship just needs a few adjustments and that's it).*

>>>

«*(Hmm, it looks like everything is in order)*, a deep voice was heard later, which clearly belonged to one of the evil adult apes. *(I congratulate you; I see that you have done a good job. I'm surprised by you).*

«*(I think you deserve a prize, kids)*, another ape voice added, this time sounding quite proud.

«**Jemky:** *(A prize like some guns for us?)*, he mentioned to them with excitement. *(Or take us hunting too?)*

«*(Maybe... But we'll talk about that when we finish this whole mission).*

«*(And well, we still have to leave, we'll return next week and there we'll start with the procedures on those children. Take care of you and take care of those children you captured... And beware... BEWARE about touching any of the new devices we brought to our laboratory!)*

>>>

«**Rocky:** *(Oh, no, no, not that, Jemky! Besides, that would mean going to pick these four mechanical monkeys on that island to extract their recording reels, and you know we can't expose them to getting wet along the way in case water splashes on them).*

«**Jemky:** *(Relax! Nothing will happen; we can assemble some boxes and bring them here. We'll use our dads' jet ski to transport us faster).*

«**Rocky:** *(And I repeat again that it is better NOT to mess with our dads' devices and vehicles, or else things will go very badly for us. And much less with that electric scalpel they brought! You have gone crazy if you are planning to use it!)*

«**Jemky:** *(Come on! And what could happen with that scalpel? It'll only be to cut out paper; it cuts too precisely... Also, think that they're PHOTOS; with some photos we'll destroy the relationship of those two no matter what, even if that dumb Dixie begs that idiot monkey to believe her word. I can even tell them that we took those pictures with the camera we took to Mr. Pinky's extra classes).*

"Oh, no! This stupid rotten annatto-hair!" Dixie grumbled as she listened to Jemky.

«**Melenky:** *(Hey, sounds fun. If you want, I'll accompany you to Hurricane Island, Jemky; I want to see that live).*

«**Mandrew:** *(Hey, not to be a killjoy and I think I now agree with Rocky, but those two are indestructible; they're not going to believe something like that).*

«Jemky: (With evidence, I don't think their indestructibility will last, you'll see. We can extract photos from the video recordings; our dads said that these mechanical monkeys can take photos. And then we can manipulate them).

«Rocky: (Well, are you also realizing that we can't leave all these kidnapped children alone either, Jemky?

«Jemky: (If you don't want to go, then you'll stay and take care of them, Rocky... Well, so, you'll accompany me, Melenky).

«Melenky: (I'll drive the jet ski, okay?!)

“I need to see how they did all that!” said Dixie, very angry, taking out that cassette and trying the next one...

Chapter 66: The Last Records

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Diddy and Dixie looked more curiously at the screen, after inserting that cassette, which was titled:

>>> “Day 75. Dixie's photos”

«**Rocky:** *(Jemky, I'm sorry for telling you this and I know you're deeply in love with Dixie, but you're already insane).*

«**Jemky:** *(Don't be boring, I assure you that the relationship of that pair of stupid monkeys will not be saved from this).*

On that occasion, only the active Ricky's subscreen could be displayed, where Jemky and Melenky were now seen on Hurricane Island introducing ‘Melvyn’, ‘Jenny’ and ‘Mandy’ into a box of wood, and then carrying the latter tied to the jet ski they used. Apparently, they were going to bring them to the islet of the building.

>>>

«**Jemky:** *(These are the tapes, right?),* he asked as he, Melenky and Mandrew were seen through Jenny's subscreen, now inside the building.

It was observed how he was extracting rolls of extensive magnetic tapes from Jenny's abdomen. Later, they did the same with ‘Mandy’ and ‘Melvyn’. Meanwhile, Rocky was seen wearing the electrode suit with which they controlled the mechanical children. In fact, only Ricky's screen was shown on Hurricane Island alongside the herd of kidnapped kong children.

«**Rocky:** *(Are you aware that you'll have to put those magnetic tapes in more than sixty video cassettes?)*

«**Melenky:** *(That's why our dads have quite a few of those cassettes).*

«**Jemky:** *(We have to extract the best scenes from these video recordings to make photocopies of them).*

>>>

«**Melenky:** *(This is the day we fought with that pair because of those challenges),* he said as he cut out one of the tapes and then rolled it into a video cassette.

«**Jemky:** *(By the way, I apologize for all my shouting in these video recordings),* he added as he finished winding a tape into a cassette, and then wrote on it with marker the titles and days of the recordings. *(Well, after this, we'll take the photos).*

>>>

«**Jemky:** *(Ready... here they are),* he said in an evil tone, holding in his hands a pile of what seemed to be some photographs taken from the video recordings.

Through Mandy's screen, Jemky could be seen outside the building, in a corner with abundant vegetation.

Mandrew (MANDY): *(Are you ready?)*, he asked Jemky, speaking to him through 'Mandy'.

«**Jemky:** *(More than ready!... Hey, and seriously, these mechanical children look so real)*, he commented, looking closely at the camera before walking away. *(Well, let's start with this photo first)*.

Jemky showed 'Mandy' one of the photographs to Mandy's camera, where Diddy appeared hugging and kissing Dixie on the cheek. This photo seemed to be on Hurricane Island, probably in one of the moments where the quartet was spending time with Diddy and Dixie. Then, Jemky handed the photograph to 'Mandy' and took a few steps back.

Mandrew (MANDY): *(Well... stand a little further back and more to the left...)*, he said to him at the same time that he extended the photograph forward as if he were trying to fit something in. *(Now! Strike the pose)*.

Jemky made a pose similar to the one Diddy had in that photo, and stayed like that for a couple of seconds until a sound similar to the one a camera makes when capturing photos was heard, apparently coming from 'Mandy'.

Mandrew (MANDY): *(Perfect! Now with the next photo)*.

Dixie advanced that scene in fast motion while she saw Jemky successively handing the photographs to 'Mandy', and then he seemed to try to imitate or strike poses guided by the photos. These photographs were all of Diddy and Dixie, mostly about Dixie, which seemed to come from the scenes of those video recordings. 'Mandy', that is, Mandrew, was giving instructions to Jemky to pose so that he could take a photo of him.

>>>

Scenes later, only Ricky's subscreen was visible, whom Rocky continued to control on Hurricane Island. Later, the Melvyn's subscreen also came back on, showing Melenky from the front.

«**Melenky:** *(Are they all already?)*

«**Jemky:** *(There are still three left, wait)*.

The quartet's room was shown, which had the floor full of scattered pieces of paper, as if they were doing any school work. On the floor was Jemky, who apparently was cutting paper with the same electric scalpel that the group of mandrills and orangutans had.

«**Jemky:** *(Hmm, that pair of monkeys thinks they're 'indestructible'... but let's see if this is of their size!)*, he expressed hatefully as he continued cutting in a similar way as if he were drawing.

«**Rocky:** *(Hey, but be careful! Our dads said those blades are fragile... Oh, no...)*

Suddenly, Jemky stopped as the blade he was using broke.

«**Rocky:** *(Nooo! I said they're fragile!)*, he exclaimed, sounding alarmed.

«**Jemky:** *(Uhh... don't worry, there's still one more blade left)*.

«**Rocky:** *(JUST ONE BLADE?! There were five!)*

«**Jemky:** *(Just relax! There are only three photographs of Dixie left; it'll resist).*

Dixie was only filled with enormous fury as she watched the next few minutes of that scene: what Jemky was doing was cutting out her silhouette from each photograph, and then pasting them on the photographs that he had taken from himself, trying to fit them together as best he could as if they were a puzzle, even adjusting the lighting with other tools he had.

«**Jemky:** *(Now yes, Melenky...)*, he said in an evil tone, standing up with the photographs in hand. *(Prepare Melvyn).*

And finally, what Jemky did was, with the help of Melenky, he took new photos of those manipulated photographs, through 'Melvyn'. Those new photos were the same ones they had shown Diddy and Dixie the day before when they made them fight.

“Urgh! This blasted orangutan is a crazy maniac!” Dixie exclaimed, too furiously, stamping her feet and banging on the sideboard. “Doesn't that burnt-hair have anything else to do?!”

«**Jemky:** *(Perfect!)*, he said, holding the new photographs in his hands and looking at them with an evil look.

«**Mandrew:** *(I've already finished the painting!)*, he said, appearing on the scene and apparently returning to the room.

Mandrew was carrying in his hands the same painting that, according to Jemky, he had given to Dixie a long time ago.

Jemky searched through the pieces of paper on the floor until he found a fragment of a photo showing the painting that Dixie had given to Diddy on their last date. Then, he looked at the painting Mandrew was carrying.

«**Jemky:** *(Brilliant! It looks identical).*

«**Rocky:** *(Hey, hey, hey, wait a minute!)*, he exclaimed, appearing on scene with the electrode suit on and observing that painting. *(Where did you get those colored stones that you put here?)*

«**Mandrew:** *(These are the ones our dads brought).*

«**Rocky:** *(WHAT?! Did you go crazy?!)*, he exclaimed, snatching the painting from Mandrew and, instantly, trying to tear the stones from it.

«**Jemky:** *(HEY! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!)*, he exclaimed, snatching it back.

«**Rocky:** *(Those stones are the quartz that our dads will use for the procedure with those children! Why are you going to use them for this painting that you're going to give to Dixie?!)*

«**Jemky:** *(Oh, keep calm! It's not for Dixie, it's just to say I gave it to her. When we return, we'll take out the stones again; no problem).*

«**Rocky:** *(BUT WHAT IF THEY FALL OFF?! And by the way, I don't think all this you're doing is going to work to make those two break up).*

«**Jemky:** *(You didn't even want to collaborate on this, so shut up and just watch!)*

«**Rocky:** *(You really are tremendously intense, really! Maybe everything will go wrong for you).*

«**Jemky:** *(You'll see that pair of monkeys can't be saved from this!... By the way, I want to take more photos; let's check the other photocopies).*

"This blasted burnt-hair," Diddy muttered, wanting to explode too.

>>> “Day 80. We managed to get those pathetic monkeys to break up!?”

“Oh, no,” Dixie whispered as she inserted the penultimate video cassette, which was from the previous day.

Both Diddy and Dixie knew the scenes they would see next and, at the same time, they knew that they would have to prepare themselves to receive and hear the latest humiliations towards them from the quartet.

In that video recording, only the subscreens of ‘Ricky’ and ‘Mandy’ were displayed on Hurricane Island with the herd of kidnapped kong children, implying what Jemky and Melenky would be busy with at that moment. Even so, the voices of the latter two could be heard in the video recording as if they were speaking through some intercom device.

(Rocky! Mandrew! We already saw that pair coming here!), Jemky's voice was heard as if it came from another device. *(Go put those letters down quickly!... I'll let you know when we're done with those two. Meanwhile, be careful not to call me on this intercom until I call you again!)*

«**Mandrew:** *(Alright!)*

Mandrew, through ‘Mandy’, went to some bushes where they had hidden a few letters.

«**Rocky:** *(I still don't have faith in this whole plan, but well... We'll enter through Mr. Pinky's high window and then into his room, right?)*

Rocky (RICKY): *(Hey, everyone!),* he called to the entire herd. *(We need three volunteers to come help us hide something).*

(But a part of the ship's gunwale broke), one of the children replied, pointing towards the ship. *(It needs to be repaired).*

Rocky (RICKY): *(WHAT?! Nooo! Today we were going to sail the ship and that gunwale reaches all the way to the structural part),* he exclaimed, scandalized before trying to calm down. *(Urgh, okay, we'll repair it later... But now we need three of you urgently; to those who want to participate we give fifty candies).*

(I WANT!), the entire herd exclaimed, rushing towards 'Ricky' and 'Mandy'.

>>>

Rocky (RICKY): *(Hurry up, these kids don't have that much strength!),* he exclaimed as an external wall of Mr. Pinky's house was visualized.

Mandrew (MANDY): *(Wait, I couldn't open that drawer! I'm going to go up again)*, he responded after having hidden those letters in Mr. Pinky's closet, as had been mentioned before.

Mandrew, through 'Mandy', was getting her out of a high window of the house, where one of the kidnapped kong children helped her up and down to the outside.

(Mandrew! Rocky! We already did it!), Jemky was heard over an intercom.

«**Mandrew:** *(It's Jemky!)*, he said before the sound of the intercom could be heard. *(Okay!)*

Rocky (RICKY): *(Okay, now let's hide, let's go, fast!)*.

(Who are we hiding from?), the other kidnapped Kong children asked.

Rocky (RICKY): *(Uhh, it's not an important matter, don't ask, please... By the way, be careful not to tell this to anyone else; don't do the same thing again as when you told Diddy and Dixie about our last trap?)*

«**Mandrew:** *(Hey, Rocky, if you want, take these kids back to the ship. I'll stay to see if everything goes well)*.

>>>

«**Mandrew:** *(Here come those monkeys, they're headed for the house!)*, he said while he had 'Mandy' hidden behind some trees, but with a view towards Mr. Pinky's house.

«**Rocky:** *(Hmm, and let me guess before you say it: do they come hugging or holding hands, so calmed and as if they didn't believe anything-)*

«**Mandrew:** *(No, no, no!)*, he interrupted. *(In fact... I don't see Diddy looking so happy)*.

In the scene, Diddy was seen from afar entering Mr. Pinky's house in a hurry and reluctantly, while Dixie was behind him. It implied that that moment was where Diddy was looking for the letters in Mr. Pinky's closet.

>>>

«**Mandrew:** *(Whoa, wait, wait, wait!)*, he exclaimed as he saw Diddy now coming down from the house and Dixie behind him. *(It seems that the little monkey really isn't happy at all)*.

(Diddy, no!), Dixie was heard saying. *(I swear I didn't even know about those letters! I don't know where they came from! I-I mean, I did send more letters these days, but they were for DK Island!)*

(Enough was enough, Dixie! Tell me the truth!), Diddy replied, stopping. *(Was that why you wanted to send more letters later?!... And wait a minute, that's why you also told me that Jemky's matter had been a deal and a joke for me?)*

(No, Diddy!)

«**Mandrew:** *(They're arguing! They're arguing! I think it didn't turn out that bad!)*

«**Rocky:** *(I don't believe you! Really?! Let me listen, let me listen!)*

>>>

«**Mandrew:** *(Whoa, whoa, whoa! Jemky has to see this! He has to see this!)*

(What?! Hey, no! Diddy!), Dixie exclaimed, taking Diddy's arm. (No, no, no! Wait, Diddy! I don't want to end this because of something so unfair!)

(I'm serious, Dixie Kong!), Diddy replied, turning away. (I'm not going to continue with this, you don't want to explain to me how everything happened!)

«**Rocky:** *(I... don't... believe... this... This has to be a camera failure!)*

(DIDDY! No, Diddy, please!), Dixie exclaimed, trying to run after Diddy while he was already far away. (Ugh, you know what?! I'll find out all this for MYSELF AND I'LL PROVE YOU OTHERWISE, DIDDY!)

«**Rocky:** *(It can't be, I take back my words! I TAKE MY WORDS BACK!... Was it achieved?!)*

«**Mandrew:** *(WELL, YES! Did you just hear the same thing as me?! The monkey told her they broke up!... What time do Jemky and Melenky arrive?! We have to tell them but NOW!)*

«**Rocky:** *(By the way, go back to Mandy where the boat is too; we have to solve that gunwale thing... And wow, I swear I thought that plan wasn't going to work with those two).*

While for Diddy and Dixie that moment had been quite frustrating, painful and now outrageous, for the quartet it was simply like a television show.

>>>

«**Melenky:** *(What's going on?! Talk!)*, he exclaimed as the 'Melvyn' and 'Jenny' subscreens came back on.

«**Rocky:** *(We have good news and bad news for you... Well, the bad news is that an important piece of the darn gunwale got broken, and we won't be able to sail the ship today!... And the good news is that... the whole plan worked with those two monkeys!)*

«**Jemky:** *(SWEAR TO ME!... R-really?! Or are you lying-)*

«**Mandrew:** *(No! Is seriously! The monkey even went to the house to look for the letters in Mr. Pinky's closet! I was watching them and I saw their entire argument that they later had, it seems that Diddy did believe everything, Dixie kept insisting him to believe her, the monkey was crying and told her that he no longer wanted to be her boyfriend and broke up with her!)*

«**Rocky:** *(Hey, Jemky, I apologize for underestimating your plan, but it really worked just the way you wanted it to!)*

«**Jemky:** *(Oh, no, no, no, it has to be a joke! Did you see?! I told you IT WAS GOING TO WORK!... Although we would still have to make sure that they have really broken up. It's not going to be like last time with that wrench trap).*

«**Rocky:** *(Well, let's go solve that gunwale piece matter while you two tell us how things went with that pair of monkeys).*

«**Jemky:** *(Well, what can I tell you? I hadn't seen those two with my own eyes for a while; they even thought I was really dead because of the shot; I still remember their faces as if they were seeing my spirit).*

«**Mandrew:** *(And did you show them all the fabricated evidence we made?)*

«**Jemky:** *(Absolutely! I showed them the letter, the painting, the photos, I showed them that I don't have any scar from the gunshot, I lied to them that Dixie had given me the emerald and wanted to steal Diddy's pyramid, and I even mentioned the meaning that Dixie has with that emerald).*

«**Melenky:** *(You had to see that dumb monkey Diddy's face with everything Jemky showed).*

“This stupid burnt-hair!” Diddy exclaimed angrily as he listened to the scene, as did Dixie.

>>>

«**Jemky:** *(Deny everything, pretend that you know absolutely nothing about the topic!)*

Rocky (RICKY): *(Huh? But what's the point of this, Dixie?),* he asked, feigning confusion at what Dixie was saying when she went to look for them to ask if they didn't have something to do with the matter about the fabricated evidences. *(What's wrong with you?!)*

(Uh, forget it), Dixie replied.

«**Jemky:** *(Hmm, let's see what else she tells us).*

Jemky (JENNY): *(Ricky! Are these the ones we need?),* he said, purposely appearing in front of Dixie along with the others in the group, holding some pieces of wood.

Mandrew (MANDY): *(Dixie!),* he exclaimed, feigning surprise too. *(What brings you here?)*

(Uhh... no, nothing. I just wanted to greet you. Goodbye!), Dixie replied before leaving completely.

«**Jemky:** *(Oops, so it looks like IT IS TRUE!),* he exclaimed with so much excitement. *(THE PLAN WORKED!)*

«**Melenky:** *(That means they broke up!)*

«**Mandrew:** *(Oh, poor monkey girl, it seems that her boyfriend didn't want to believe her),* he added in a sarcastic tone.

«**Rocky:** *(And by the way, what happened to Diddy?... Ugh, I'm not a fan of gossip, but with those two there is an exception at this moment).*

«**Jemky:** *(That one has to be crying, and I hope he is! Idiot monkey).*

>>>

The next scene showed, through the subscreens of ‘Ricky’, ‘Melvyn’ and ‘Mandy’, themselves with the herd of kong children repairing the gunwale of the ship that had broken down. But through Jenny's subscreen, Diddy was seen in the distance, who was apparently sitting on the branch of a tree, lamenting after what had happened between Dixie and him.

This scene caused the current Dixie pity and, likewise, enormous shame for Diddy, who was just trying to stay calm, since he already sensed the humiliating comments and actions that he would hear from Jemky.

«**Jemky:** *(Wow, what did I say? That plan had to work no matter what)*, he said before speaking mockingly while focusing on Diddy. *(Oh, poor stupid monkey, look how he's crying for his now ex-girlfriend... Hmm, but let's see if he really broke up with her. If he responds to Jenny's advances it's because he broke up with Dixie... And so, I could even make Dixie won't love him anymore either).*

«**Rocky:** *(Hey, but don't bother the monkey now; bring those vines that we need here first).*

«**Jemky:** *(I'll just ask him to confirm; nothing will happen. This is the last phase of the plan. I'll bring you those vines later).*

«**Rocky:** *(Ugh! You really are stubborn).*

Jemky, ignoring as always, headed 'Jenny' to where Diddy was, who, upon noticing her, tried to hide his low mood.

Jemky (JENNY): *(Uh... Hi, Diddy!)*, she greeted him, faking a smile. *(Uhh... is something going on?)*

(No), Diddy replied without looking up.

Jemky headed 'Jenny' to sit next to him, but Diddy looked at her strangely and moved away from her.

Jemky (JENNY): *(Hey, don't worry, I won't do anything to you... What do you have?... Is something wrong?)*

(No, it's nothing), he replied, turning his gaze.

>>>

Jemky (JENNY): *(Well, but if you need anything, I could help you)*, she added, feigning kindness. *(Uhh... isn't it anything about Dixie, just in case?)*

(No... Well, yes... I mean...), Diddy replied, turning his back. *(That shouldn't matter to you!)*

«**Jemky:** *(Oops, what a pity, little monkey)*, he commented, trying to contain a laugh. *(So, those two broke up!)*

>>>

(By the way, Jenny, it's not to be bad, but... I need to be alone now, please, okay?)

Jemky (JENNY): *(Oh, okay... it's okay)*, she replied, smiling at Diddy and trying to hug him. *(But don't feel bad anymore, Diddy. Maybe Dixie didn't feel the same-)*

(Hey, wait a minute!), Diddy exclaimed, moving away instantly.

Jemky (JENNY): *(What? Hey, I just wanted to give you a hug to make you feel better. Don't you want me to hug you?)*

(Well, no, thank you. And I said I wanted to be alone now).

Jemky (JENNY): *(But I do want to hug you, Diddy. Don't be shy, I want to be with-)*

Diddy tried to get up immediately, but was stopped by 'Jenny'.

(No, no, no, Jenny! Don't think that cause of that I'm going to allow you-)

«**Jemky:** *(Now this dumb monkey will fall once and for all!)*, he exclaimed at the moment he cornered him against the tree.

(Jenny, no, seriously!)

Jemky (JENNY): *(Well, but if you're feeling bad, how about... you give me a chance now, Diddy? ... Come on, monke-)*

(No, let go of me!), Diddy exclaimed before getting free and trying to run away from her.

«**Jemky:** *(UGH, don't be a coward, stupid monkey!)*, he exclaimed, cornering him against the tree to get closer to him.

(No, Jenny!), Diddy exclaimed as he pushed her away and made her fall to the ground from the height of the branch.

«**Jemky:** *(This stupid monkey! Has he never seen a pretty girl like Jenny?!)*, he exclaimed while 'Jenny' was lying motionless on the floor, and the only thing that could be seen on the screen was her hair. *(Huh? What's wrong? Was the camera damaged or what?)*

(Oh... No, no, no! Jenny!), Diddy was heard saying desperately and beginning to move 'Jenny'.
(Jenny, Jenny! D-did I push you really hard?! Forgive me, I didn't want to! It's that you also were-)

«**Jemky:** *(One moment! Why can't I move?!)*, he exclaimed at the moment that Diddy turned her upwards and now it could be seen the sky and Diddy's face, who showed a huge expression alarmed.

(No...), Diddy said, breathing heavily. *(Oh, no... Oh, no! Jenny! JENNY!)*

«**Jemky:** *(Oh, noooo, no, no, no! Don't tell me this stupid monkey turned her off! BLAST!)*, he exclaimed, trying to get 'Jenny' to react.

«**Rocky:** *(WHAT HAPPENED?! WHAT DID YOU SAY?!)*

«**Melenky:** *(WHAT HAPPENED TO JENNY?!)*

«**Jemky:** *(IT LOOKS LIKE THE MONKEY TURNED HER OFF!... No, no, no, DARN IT! GET UP, JENNY, GET UP, GET UP!)*

«**Mandrew:** *(Oh, no, no, he's going to discover us!)*

«**Jemky:** *(Urgh, this dumb monkey!)*, he could be heard desperately, pressing some buttons to try to get 'Jenny' to react again.

Diddy, who looked very alarmed, tried to find vital signs to 'Jenny', but in no way did it work. Then, it was the moment when Diddy stared straight and fixed at the camera, that is, at Jenny's eyes, and his expression changed immediately when he seemed to notice that those eyes were emitting a flickering light.

«Jemky: *(No, no, no, darn it! Why is he looking that way?!... No, no, WHAT IS HE DOING NOW?!)*

Apparently, Diddy not only noticed the shine in her eyes, but also in her ears, where he had found those buttons that were used to turn on, turn off or open the heads of those mechanical kongs. Diddy, without thinking so, pressed that button behind Jenny's left ear and, consequently, her head got opened, making him instantly scared.

«Jemky: *(NOOO! DARN IT, DARN IT, DARN IT!)*, he exclaimed at the same time that he could be heard hitting the buttons of the platform with which he controlled 'Jenny', but it was in vain.

«Rocky: *(NO, NO, NO! BUT WHAT DID YOU DO, JEMKY?! HE ALREADY DISCOVERED US!)*

«Jemky: *(IT WAS THAT MONKEY! That monkey pushed Jenny, made her fall and it seems she turned off!)*

Diddy, with a completely stunned expression, slowly approached 'Jenny' again, and then observed her open head in detail. While he trembled and looked fearful, he extended her hand toward the camera and covered it with a finger, implying that he was touching Jenny's eyes. With that, Diddy looked more afraid and confused, at the same time that he began to shake and breathe heavily again.

«Jemky: *(Darn! What do I do now?!)*

«Mandrew: *(You can't do anything, you fool, unless that monkey turns it back on!)*

Diddy was then seen taking both divisions of Jenny's head and reattaching it until it was closed. Afterwards, he continued giving small taps to the eyes and could see that they were made of rubber and glass. He then checked her right ear and pressed the button, with which Jenny's mechanism turned on again.

«Jemky: *(It's already turned on, it's already turned on! I can move again!)*, he exclaimed, making 'Jenny' get up again and causing another scare to Diddy.

(J-Je-Jenny... are you okay? Is that y-you?!), Diddy stammered, keeping his distance from her.

«Rocky: *(Jemky, for whatever you want most, run away! RUN FROM THAT MONKEY!)*

Jemky, without making 'Jenny' respond, proceeded to make her run immediately.

(Hey, wait!), Diddy exclaimed, who was seen starting to run after her. *(JENNY!)*

Jemky tried to make 'Jenny' run as fast as he could. But later, Diddy, with his greatest speed, managed to catch up with her.

Jemky (JENNY): *(NO, NO, LET ME GO, MONKEY!)*, she yelled at him, trying to get away from him and even slapping him.

(Hey, I just want an explanatio-), Diddy replied, dodging her blows and trying to hold her tightly. (Are you a robot?!)

Jemky (JENNY): *(NO! IT'S NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS!)*

Diddy was struggling to stop her, while 'Jenny' tried to push him away. When suddenly, Diddy grabbed her ear again and pressed the off button on her ear, leaving her motionless again.

«**Jemky:** *(Oh, darn! YOU GO HELP JENNY!)*

«**Mandrew:** *(It's what we want to do most but right now we are holding a heavy piece of that ship).*

«**Jemky:** *(Ugh, what the heck with you!)*

In the video recording, Diddy was seen inspecting 'Jenny', who then opened her head again and observed in detail the mechanism it had inside. He looked so stunned on his face that he didn't even seem like he had been sad for Dixie.

«**Jemky:** *(Get away, monkey! Oh, darn it!),* he grumbled while he could do nothing.

«**Rocky:** *(Oh, I think I already know why Jenny turned off so easily, Jemky... Because the monkey threw that fruit juice at her and that left her defective!)*

«**Jemky:** *(Oh, are you serious?!)*

Then, Diddy turned on 'Jenny' again, whom Jemky immediately made her give him a couple of hard slaps and a push and then continue running away from him.

(HEY, I JUST WANTED TO ASK YOU WHAT YOU ARE!), Diddy replied, getting up and going after her again.

On Jenny's subscreen, it was observed for several minutes how she ran aimlessly and focused between moments behind her, where Diddy could be seen running after her. Between moments, Diddy managed to reach her, but she pushed him away from her and continued running away from him until she tried to hide behind abundant vegetation.

«**Jemky:** *(Ah, what time does this monkey give up? I'm getting tired of simulating running!),* he said with a breathless voice.

(Come here! I just want to know who you are and why you are like this!), Diddy replied, catching her and holding her arms. *(You're not real, right?!)*

Jemky (JENNY): *(What are you saying?! Of course I am, you're crazy, monkey!)* she reaffirmed, trying to get loose.

(I'm not crazy, you're a robot, right?! Why does your head open up and you have some wires and a black box inside?)

Jemky (JENNY): *(What wires?! What box?! You're crazy!)*

(But I just want an explanation! Are you the only one like that or what?! What are you or who are you really?!)

Jemky (JENNY): *(Let's see, if you kiss me, I'll tell you, okay?!)*, she responded, trying to approach him.

(Hey, NO!), Diddy replied, releasing her and moving away from her, but then he shrugged it off.
(Ugh, you're not real anyways!)

Jemky (JENNY): *(Urgh, blasted monkey!)*, he exclaimed, stopping following him and running away from him again.

They both ran between those trees and some large bushes while Diddy asked her more questions and ran after her. Until at one point, Diddy caught her again and held her arms tightly.

(But just tell me, please).

Jemky (JENNY): *(I already told you! If you kiss me now, I'll tell you).*

Suddenly, movements beyond their control began to be heard from the large bushes nearby. To their surprise, it was no one more and no less than Dixie, who, as soon as she saw them, made a shocked gesture and froze.

«**Jemky:** *(Oh, no, no, no! JUST WHAT WAS MISSING! Dixie can't find out either!)*

(W-what?), Dixie stuttered, looking suspiciously at the two.

«**Rocky:** *(Jemky, Jemky, tell h er you're that monkey's new girlfriend or something, BUT DON'T LET THAT MONKEY TELL DIXIE FOR NOTHING IN THE WORLD!)*

Jemky (JENNY): *(Hi, Dixie!)*, she told him with a forced smile as Diddy held her arms.

(Uh, D-Dixie...), Diddy stuttered, looking at Dixie and then at Jenny. *(It's that J-Jenny-)*

Jemky (JENNY): *(Ah, Dixie, sorry if you don't know yet, but... Diddy and I are going on a date. Right, Diddy?)*, she interrupted, hugging him and in a sweet tone.

(What?! No, no, wait, wait!), Diddy exclaimed.

Jemky (JENNY): *(Yes, Diddy. Hadn't you told me that you broke up with Dixie and now agreed to date me? Or were you lying?)*

(Yes, we broke up, but I didn't say that).

Jemky (JENNY): *(Hey, are you denying me?!)*, she insisted, shoving him and feigning anger. *(You told me you'll date me!)*

(Wait a minute, Diddy!), Dixie exclaimed, looking at him. *(D-did you really break up with me?)*

Jemky (JENNY): *(Yes, he said he doesn't love you anymore, Dixie! And then he proposed to me to go on a date).*

>>>

(No, wait a minute, Diddy! How's that?! You told me that ours is over, but not for me yet!)

(How could it not?! You didn't want to explain to me what really happened there).

«**Jemky:** *(Oh, for all the diamonds and millipedes in the world! I'm watching them argue live!),* he exclaimed with excitement as Diddy and Dixie continued replying to each other. *(This got tense!)*

«**Melenky:** *(Wow, wow, wow, watch out; they're going to fight!)*, he added in a mocking tone.

«**Mandrew:** *(I have to admit this turned out better than we expected!)*

(Oh, look, Dixie... I do want to believe you, but with that I have no way, really... Now if you'll excuse... I was solving something about Jenny that-)

Jemky (JENNY): *(Yeah, Dixie, I'm sorry., but we're going out. And I know you two don't have anything anymore-)*

>>>

Jemky (JENNY): *(Yeah, you told me that recently, Diddy! That Dixie was a fake one to you for lying to you about that other boy and that they even had photos!)*

(Hey, Diddy!), replied Dixie. *(Ugh, how could you, Diddy Kong?!)*

Jemky: *(Well, that's enough, I need Dixie to leave).*

Jemky (JENNY): *(Admit it, Diddy! You said you're going to date me and that you don't love Dixie anymore because of what she did to you!)*

(Urgh, you know what? Better break it up, Diddy!), Dixie exclaimed, before turning angrily to leave.

(Hey, wait!), Diddy exclaimed. *(Ugh, okay, whatever you say, Dixie!)*

«**Jemky:** *(OHHH, but what am I hearing!)*, he exclaimed with shouts of shock along with the group.

«**Mandrew:** *(WHAT DID HE SAY, WHAT DID HE SAY?!)*

«**Melenky:** *(I can't believe it! This is better than a comedy show!)*

«**Jemky:** *(Ohh, what a pity, my dear Dixie!),* he said sarcastically at the moment Dixie was leaving the area.

«**Mandrew:** *(I think this is the best part of the whole plan!)*

«**Jemky:** *(Wow, I didn't know this was so much fun!),* he commented with a few mocking laughs. *(Ohh, poor monkeys, their indestructible relationship was not after all... Anyways, the show is over; what do we do with this monkey now if he just discovered us?!)*

«**Rocky:** *(Run away from him, Jemky!)*

«**Mandrew:** *(No, no, actually I don't think that's a good idea; the monkey can go find Dixie and he'll tell her. I say we kidnap him by force!... Distract him meanwhile, Jemky. We'll go for him now; wait for us!)*

(Dixie...), Diddy was heard whispering quietly in the video recording.

«**Jemky:** *(Huh? Wait, is the monkey crying?)*

Diddy continued to watch Dixie from a long distance away. He turned his face again and began to wipe his eyes, because indeed, a few tears could be seen wanting to flow from them.

Jemky (JENNY): *(Hey, but why are you crying if it's already over-)*

(Well, now, tell me what you really are!), Diddy said to 'Jenny', holding her arm tighter and trying to hold back his tears for the moment. *(You're a robot!)*

Jemky (JENNY): *(Uhh... hey, Diddy... don't you want a kiss?)* she said, getting close to his face and diverting the topic.

(No!), he responded by moving away, but still holding her at the same time. *(Tell me now! Are you some kind of secret agent robot?! Are Ricky and the others like that too or-)*

Jemky (JENNY): *(Uh, hey, Diddy, Diddy, calm down)*, she added, trying to ignore what he was saying. *(Hey, how about you tell me what happened with Dixie?)*

(Don't change the topic!), Diddy replied, filling with tears again, but trying to contain them. *(I just want an explanation! And by the way... how do you know what happened with Dixie?!)*

Jemky (JENNY): *(Well, we heard it through the grapevine somewhere; gossip travels fast, Diddy... Oh, don't cry, precious Diddy)*, she said in a sweet tone. *(Maybe Dixie wasn't for you, do you miss her now?)*

(It's none of your business! And tell me now what you are!), he replied, inevitably releasing some tears.

Jemky (JENNY): *(Or how about we kiss to make you feel better?)*, she said playfully, now holding his arms to him.

(No, Jenny!)

Jemky (JENNY): *(Come on, I kissed you last week anyways)*, she added, cornering him again towards one of the trees and ignoring everything he said.

(NO! And stop thinking you're going to distract me this way, Jen-)

Jemky started again trying to make 'Jenny' kiss him, but Diddy didn't allow her. Even so, Diddy didn't push her away so much this time, because he had to discover the reason for that mechanical appearance that 'Jenny' had.

(Just tell me!... Or is someone controlling you or what?!)

Jemky (JENNY): *(NO! And stop asking!)*

Diddy continued to push 'Jenny' away and hold her at the same time, although he didn't care so much anymore that she tried to get close to him since he now knew that she wasn't a real kong girl.

«**Rocky:** *(We are almost there! Hold him, Jemky, don't let him go!)*

On the other subscreens, the other three kids were seen heading towards where Diddy was with 'Jenny'. They tried not to make noise when they were already close to him, at the same time that they were taking out some stakes and small spears made of wood and stones, as well as some vines.

«**Rocky**: *(Now, guys, it's now or never with that monkey!)*

And, suddenly, Rocky, through 'Ricky', surprised Diddy by holding his neck with his arm and, instantly, he pointed out one of the spears to him, which ended in a very sharp stone that put Diddy's tension immediately.

(WHAT THE-)

Rocky (RICKY): *(STAY STILL!)*

Then, 'Mandy' and 'Melvyn' rushed towards Diddy too, and quickly wrapped his arms with the vines, which contained branches with thorns that were beginning to make Diddy's attempts to defend himself difficult.

(Hey, what's wrong with you?!), Diddy exclaimed, shocked at the sudden scene that arose.

Suddenly, 'Mandy' and 'Melvyn' also began to intimidate him with their wooden and stone weapons. 'Mandy' gave one to 'Jenny' and she joined in to intimidate him too.

(W-WHAT IS THIS?!), Diddy exclaimed, trying to untie himself, but those vines caused him scratches as soon as he tried to struggle. *(LET GO OF ME, WHAT DID I DO TO Y-)*

Rocky (RICKY): *(SILENCE, MONKEY!)*, he exclaimed, squeezing him for a few seconds, before releasing him and bringing the sharp stone closer to him. *(Just stay quiet)*.

(BUT WHAT IS THE REASON FOR THIS-)

'Jenny' also pressed his neck with one hand while with the other she held the spear, which grazed his chest.

Jemky (JENNY): *(Shut up, little monkey. Keep quiet if you want mercy from us)*, she told him threateningly before releasing him.

(NO! YOU'RE GOING TO TELL ME RIGHT NOW WHAT HAPPENED TO-)

Mandrew (MANDY): *(WE SAID SHUT UP!)*, she responded by slapping him and then bringing the sharp stone closer to his neck. *(Don't scream or it'll be very bad for yo-)*

(I WON'T SHUT UP!)

Diddy began to raise his legs in an agitated manner and accidentally kicked 'Melvyn' in the head, to the point of making it split open like 'Jenny'. Diddy screamed in shock when he saw that, while 'Jenny' and 'Mandy' instantly closed Melvyn's head.

(BUT WHAT ON EARTH WITH YO-)

Diddy began to scream in pain as 'Melvyn' pressed the thorny vines harder against his arms, and then gave him another slap to silence him. Then, 'Melvyn' began to wrap more of those vines

around the rest of his body, and then they took him between all four by his limbs, and began to walk carrying him hanging.

(No, no, no, WAIT! TELL ME WHAT'S THIS ALL ABOUT-)

Rocky (RICKY): *(SILENCE!)*, he replied, slapping him along the way and pressing his vines.

«**Melenky:** *(Where are we going to leave him?)*

«**Rocky:** *(We can leave him tied to a tree, and at night in one of the cabins of the ship, there we'll lock him and secure the door).*

Diddy tried to free himself, but in the position they were taking him, it was almost impossible. Furthermore, he was surrounded by vines with fine thorns, which caused him scratches at any attempt to exert force or put-up resistance.

>>>

(WHAT IS WRONG WITH YOU?! I'VE DONE NOTHING TO YOU!), Diddy shouted as he was being tied to a tree by the quartet. *(I'm not going to be friends with you again just in case-)*

'Ricky' slapped him to silence him, while the other three kids intimidated him again with their stone weapons.

(TELL ME!), Diddy demanded, shaking his legs and complaining of pain from the thorny vines. *(WHAT'S THIS ALL ABOUT?! Why did you want to catch me like this?!)*

(It's Diddy!), said one of the kong children from the kidnapped herd, appearing on the scene. *(Is he going to come with us?)*

Suddenly, several of the kidnapped kong children gathered to see Diddy.

Rocky (RICKY): *(No, no, LEAVE HIM ALONE! DON'T TOUCH HIM!)*, he exclaimed, pushing them aside and ordering them in an authoritarian tone. *(You guys go back and finish the adjustments to the ship! NO ONE comes close to Diddy!)*

(Hey, what's wrong with you?!), Diddy exclaimed, shocked at the quartet's attitude, since he didn't remember having seen them treating the herd of kong children like that.

The quartet turned their backs on Diddy without saying anything out loud, while he continued yelling at them and insisting that they give him an explanation.

«**Rocky:** *(Now, let's finish adjusting the ship and tomorrow we'll finally set sail).*

«**Mandrew:** *(Why don't we go get Dixie right now too?)*

«**Rocky:** *(Dixie is harder to catch; she has her hair and is more aggressive, she'll take all the screws out of these mechanical monkeys... And it's better that Jemky doesn't even participate in the kidnapping, since Dixie may leave Jenny crashed because of what happened. We would have to ask our dads to help us, even with Diddy we'll need some help; he's trying to put up resistance).*

«**Melenky:** *(Or I say we give up about Dixie; we'll just take Diddy... I don't think our dads want to catch two particular monkeys when we already have forty more ones).*

«**Jemky:** (No, no, we must take Dixie too, even if we have to catch her by force).

«**Melenky:** (Oh, you only want her to be your girlfriend. Leave her alone now; she doesn't love you).

«**Jemky:** (Maybe not now, but remember that she must have already been disappointed in Diddy, so I may still be able to convince her to give me a chance, you'll see. I know that at least I have to look handsome for her).

«**Mandrew:** (You really are stubborn!... Well, anyway, are we going to catch Dixie or what?)

(TELL ME! WHY DO YOU WANT ME HERE?!), Diddy shouted desperately, trying to shake his limbs in vain. (WHAT DID I DO TO YOU?! If I did something wrong and I haven't found out, forgive me, but let me go and explain-)

Jemky (JENNY): (URGH, SHUT UP NOW, YOU STUPID MONKEY!), he replied, going towards him and slapping him.

(But what happens to you?! Just tell me what I've done to you or why you have me here like this!... I know we're no longer friends, but it's not for-)

Rocky (RICKY): (SHUT UP ONCE FOR ALL! Quiet), he told him, taking him by the shirt and putting one of the stone spears around his neck along with the rest of the group.

Although Jenny and company's quartet always had the faces of harmless children, at that moment they showed looks that, when analyzed in depth, were almost identical to those that Jemky and company had when they threatened.

(Hey, hey, hey, just listen to me, please), Diddy responded, speaking more calmly and beginning to fear them. (I don't know what this is about. I know we're not friends anymore, but at no time have I done anything bad to you, and if I have, you can tell me and we'll fix it, okay?... And just in case it's about Jenny, I didn't mean to hurt her or something like that; she cornered me and I just pushed her away, but she fell out of the tree... And I don't know why she was paralyzed and... her head split open and... Are you guys some kind of robots or what?! Is Melvyn like that too, by the way?!... What about you guys, Mandy and Ricky?! Are you like that too?)

The quartet just lowered their stone weapons and turned their backs on Diddy without answering him, and then walked away from him, letting him speak alone.

(HEY, BUT ANSWER ME!), Diddy replied. (Just clarify this for me!)

«**Rocky:** (Don't tell him anything, and don't talk about it out loud through the microphones).

«**Mandrew:** (Okay, but I think putting something on his snout; he's screaming at us like crazy... And threatening him is useless because we have to take him alive).

«**Jemky:** (Right now I'm looking for some vines to tie him to).

«**Rocky:** (By the way, I think Ricky needs a little oil on the arm and head screws, can you help me?)

Melenky and Mandrew, using their respective mechanical kongs, took some tools and began to make some adjustments to 'Ricky', among which they involved lifting the skin on his arm and

opening his head, which earned other scream of shock from Diddy, who desperately asked them again the reason for their mechanical appearance.

(RICKY!), Diddy exclaimed from his position. (So, all of you...?!)

«**Jemky:** *(Oh, but don't make those adjustments in front of the monkey!)*

Jemky (JENNY): *(You haven't seen anything, okay?!),* she said to Diddy, heading back towards him and then threatening him with the stone spear.

(Jenny... please, I just want an explanation), Diddy told him seriously. *(I really don't understand anything about this. First of all, I don't know what you guys are-)*

Jemky (JENNY): *(Look, Diddy),* she interrupted without lowering her spear. *(Why don't you just stay quiet and calm? Better think about Dixie or something).*

(Urgh, don't change the topic!), he responded grumbling and, at the same time, his eyes became moist.

Jemky (JENNY): *(Ohh, I have forgotten it, Dixie is no longer your girlfriend, right?),* she said in a mocking tone. *(Don't you love her anymore?)*

(That's none of your business!), he replied, trying to flail his limbs, but he hurt himself doing so. *(Now I just want to know the context of this! Tell me!)*

Jemky (JENNY): *(Well, it's not your business either!),* she exclaimed, approaching him and threatening him with the spear. *(Now we would appreciate it if you would stay quiet, or else I'll kiss you again so you can forget about Dixie, okay? ... And now you would have no way to escape from me, little monkey).*

(Urgh, BUT I JUST WANT YOU TO TELL ME WHAT YOU ARE AND WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT!), Diddy replied, ignoring her. *(And by the way, what are you really going to do with that ship and these kids-)*

Jemky (JENNY): *(JUST SHUT UP!),* she interrupted, slapping him. *(Don't ask, you have nothing to know).*

(BUT I NEED TO KNOW-)

'Jenny' slapped him and, after that, wrapped a vine around his snout and tied it tightly, while Diddy continued screaming with his mouth closed.

Jemky (JENNY): *(Cute little monkey),* she said, smiling at him and subtly taking his chin, before leaving.

«**Rocky:** *(Better leave him in the cabin right now).*

The quartet picked up Diddy again and began to move him. Diddy showed enormous desperation as he tried to scream and thrash, but to no avail. Finally, they took him into one of the ship's cabins and then simply locked him up.

>>>

The following scenes were in the early morning, where the quartet always took turns during the night to stay awake and make sure everything was in order. None of the four could be heard speaking, and only one of the subscreens was displayed, which belonged to 'Ricky', where the ship and the huts they had for the herd of kong children could be seen.

Suddenly, Melvyn's subscreen turned on, and what was displayed was nothing more than Diddy's face, who seemed to be observing 'Melvyn' in detail while he had him hidden among the trees. He even pressed the button that opened his head and began to inspect into its internal mechanism.

"How did you manage to free yourself?" Dixie asked Diddy, observing the scene.

"Luckily you didn't pick up all the debris from the cabin a few days ago. So, I found one and with that I was able to cut the vines with thorns that were tied to my hands. I went out the window and tried not to let Ricky see me... Well, who we used to call Ricky."

«**Rocky:** (*MELENKYYY!*), he shouted in a desperate way. (*Wake up, wake up! THE MONKEY CAUGHT MELVYN!... JEMKY! MANDREW! WAKE UP TOO!*)

«**Melenky:** (*Huh?... But what-*)

Rocky: (*Hurry up! Lift up Melvyn and let's catch that monkey!... Blast! How did he escape?!*)

Melenky made 'Melvyn' move, suddenly scaring Diddy, but then the two of them lunged at each other to not let each other escape. Subsequently, Rocky also joined in to catch Diddy through 'Ricky'.

«**Rocky:** (*JEMKY! MANDREW!*), he called them as they struggled with Diddy.

«**Jemky:** (*OH, WHAT'S UP?!*)

«**Mandrew:** (*BUT HOW DID THAT MONKEY COME OUT?!*)

(*NO, NO, LEAVE ME!*), Diddy exclaimed, trying to defend himself from 'Ricky' and 'Melvyn'.

Diddy, with no other alternative, began to slap them both and lunged at 'Ricky' and then pressed the off button.

«**Rocky:** (*OH, DARN!*)

'Melvyn' lunged at Diddy, but he managed to stop him and knocked him to the ground and then turned him off as well.

«**Melenky:** (*Jemky and Mandrew, help us!*)

«**Jemky:** (*We'll take over it!*)

'Jenny' and 'Mandy' appeared behind Diddy and knocked him to the ground as well. 'Jenny' was in charge of keeping Diddy restrained while 'Mandy' went to turn 'Melvyn' and 'Ricky' back on. Diddy managed to give 'Jenny' a push and lunged at her to turn her off, and then he went to lunge at 'Mandy' and turned her off as well. Unfortunately, 'Mandy' had managed to turn 'Ricky' and 'Melvyn' back on before, and they launched themselves to attack Diddy. In the middle of the act, they also turned 'Jenny' and 'Mandy' back on, and now the four of them were active again and attacked Diddy.

The quartet struggled for a while against Diddy, who was now putting up more resistance to avoid getting caught. The four of them tried to hold him by the limbs and gave him a few blows to make him stay still. Diddy got to the point of having to defend himself in any way possible, and he also began to slap and kick all four of them without exception, even hitting the buttons that opened their heads.

A few struggles later, Diddy managed to free himself from the quartet and began to run at full speed, away from the site.

«Rocky: *(NOOO, DON'T LET HIM ESCAPE! LET'S GO AFTER HIM!)*

«Jemky: *(Darn, if we lose him, he'll rat us out!)*

The quartet also began the chase, which was a little complicated because Diddy was quite agile and climbed the trees and then came down using the vines, something that was difficult for the quartet due to their fragility.

>>>

«Jemky: *(There's the monkey! Come on, don't let him get into the house!)*

The quartet had assumed that Diddy would head to Mr. Pinky's house, and so he did. The four of them, stealthily, began to climb the stairs of the house while they heard Diddy knocking on the door without stopping.

(DIXIE! DIXIE!), Diddy called to the door with extreme desperation. *(PLEASE, OPEN!... DIXIE!)*

«Mandrew: *(Oh, no, no, we'll have to take over Dixie too right now!)*

«Melenky: *(I think Dixie is not at home; she doesn't answer him).*

(DIXIE, IT'S URGENT, PLEASE!)

The four of them went up to the porch where Diddy and Dixie's room was. They walked in silence until they came up behind Diddy, and acted quickly to catch him.

(NO, NO, LET GO OF ME!... DIXIE!)

“Uh, hey, Dixie, didn't you ever listen to me?”, Diddy asked Dixie as they watched the scene.

“Diddy, I wasn't home at that time; I slept outside the shelter... I had no idea that all that was happening, I'm sorry.”

The quartet was seen on the scene struggling with Diddy to try to hold him back, but he was putting up quite a bit of resistance and now he was defending himself with blows against the four.

Melenky (MELVYN): *(Darn it! This monkey is going to destroy these robot monkeys!)*

Mandrew (MANDY): *(HEY, DON'T TALK LOUD, TURN OFF THE MICROPHONE!)*

(W-what?!), Diddy exclaimed in the middle of the struggle due to the carelessness of both of them in speaking loudly.

«**Jemky:** *(HEY, BUT DON'T BE DUMB, DON'T RAT US OUT!)*

(BUT WHAT THE HECK ARE YOU?!), Diddy replied before giving the four of them a few final blows and pushes, and then got out of the house and fled at full speed.

«**Rocky:** *(DON'T LET HIM GO, REACH HIM!)*

The quartet got down from the house and began to chase Diddy without stopping. On the subscreens, only Diddy's silhouette could be seen running in front of them in the middle of lush vegetation.

«**Melenky:** *(Ugh, I can't take it anymore!)*, he said at the same time that he could be heard panting from fatigue. *(Is there no way for these mechanical monkeys to run in automatic mode?!)*

«**Jemky:** *(We can't give up; that monkey could tell someone about this and bye-bye everything!)*

Diddy began to climb a slope that had a semi-rocky ground, and he kicked a few small stones at the quartet, which were falling in their faces and obstructing their vision.

«**Rocky:** *(No, no, let's go there better!)*, he pointed in another direction.

The quartet climbed some trees on the sides of the path Diddy was climbing. They kept moving like this until they reached flat ground and, trying to make a surprise move, they lunged at Diddy and managed to grab him.

(NO, LEAVE ME NOW! FOR THE LAST TIME: I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU WANT FROM ME!), Diddy exclaimed, struggling to get free of them. *(I know you guys are scheming something, I KNOW YOU ARE-)*

They all dealt him a few blows to leave him stunned, but even so, Diddy hit back at the four of them to defend himself, no matter who it was. It should be said that the narrow site of the confrontation had other dark slopes on the sides, which made the five of them slip slightly.

Later, between all the punching and pushing, the four of them gave one back to Diddy; it was so strong that this time it made him slide down one of the slopes to the point of him no longer being able to stand up. Diddy, out of survival instinct, grabbed Melvyn's ankle, making him slip as well, but the other three kids caught him in time. 'Melvyn' gave Diddy a single kick and got him to let go... and made Diddy roll completely down towards that dark slope; his yells of despair were heard further and further away, at the same time that his silhouette was lost in the dark.

«**Rocky:** *(...)*

«**Jemky:** *(...)*

«**Mandrew:** *(...)*

«**Melenky:** *(... And... what will happen to him now?)*, he asked after a silence.

«**Rocky:** *(Uhh... well... I don't think he'll come out of there, right?)*

«**Mandrew:** *(So, he won't rat us out?... Unless he survives).*

«**Jemky:** (Well... he brought it on himself for being nosy, in the first place... And we better get out of here before anyone sees us).

“Diddy! And how did you get out of there?”

"Oh, no, don't remind me," Diddy replied. "At the bottom of that slope it was so muddy and rocky that it took me hours to get out of there... and it could have been worse."

>>> "Day 81"

The last videocassette was about that same day they were there. It didn't have any written title so it was assumed that it hadn't recorded the completed day.

The images it showed were about the quartet returning to the site where the ship was. They seemed to have given up on chasing Diddy after he fell down the hillside.

«**Melenky:** (Today we'll sail the ship no matter what!)

«**Mandrew:** (Yes, but without those two monkeys. I wanted to see them along with these other children too!)

«**Rocky:** (But we can't anymore; we can't get into that dark hillside to look for that monkey, right?... And as for Dixie, I don't recommend going after her... but we can tell our dads to take over and catch her!)

«**Jemky:** (What are you saying? How come we can't go get Dixie? Maybe she doesn't even feel like fighting now because of her breakup with Diddy; she's an easy target right now... And I repeat: our dads are not going to want to go specifically for her when we already have these other kids).

«**Melenky:** (But we won't be able to catch her by force! And at the same time, we can't let her get lost... I think we would have to tell our dads to help us catch her, who can tell them?)

«**Mandrew:** (I'll tell them if you want, as soon as they come).

«**Jemky:** (Hey, hey, are you serious?! Of course we can go catch her ourselves through these mechanical monkeys).

«**Rocky:** (And do you want her to destroy them? We can't hurt these mechanical monkeys, even with Diddy they got already hurt a little).

«**Melenky:** (Hey!... I think our dads arrived), he said as additional sounds began to be heard in the building.

«**Mandrew:** (I-I think so! It's now or never; I'll tell them to help us with Dixie! Do you have any photos of her?!)

«**Rocky:** (From the photos Jemky cut out! There are pictures of Diddy and Dixie there! SHOW THEM TO THEM!)

«**Jemky:** (HEY, NO, NO, NO! You're going to make our dads angry! They are NOT going to want to fulfill our whim!)

«**Rocky:** (Ugh, Jemky! Dixie will be another kid for the collection of mechanical kids that they'll have, how can they not want to accept her?!... Besides, are you going to tell me that you don't want to see Dixie again? Didn't you want to rescue her so that she would later love you?)

«**Jemky:** (But we can go after her ourselves, I know we can! Or are you saying that you're afraid of a girl?!)

«**Mandrew:** (Oh, the one who was afraid of girls when he was little spoke).

«**Rocky:** (Mandrew!)

«**Jemky:** (Look, I'd appreciate it if you didn't mention that to me, you idiot!), he spoke through clenched teeth. (And I'm telling you that our dads are going to get angry and tell us NO! So, let's go get Dixie ourselves!)

«**Mandrew:** (NO! Dixie is going to fight back and tear these mechanical monkeys apart, get it!)

«**Rocky:** (And by the way, Jemky, you yourself told us not to use force when we kidnapped these other kids, now with Dixie you change your mind?)

«**Jemky:** (Go ahead then! You wanted and felt capable of capturing these kids by force, why don't you apply it now with Dixie?)

«**Melenky:** (WE CAN'T DO IT, JEMKY! We have to tell our dads no matter what!)

«**Rocky:** (I'm going to tell them! Excuse me!), he said, apparently withdrawing.

«**Mandrew:** (Me too, let's go!)

«**Jemky:** (HEY, NO!... UGH! They're going to tell you no, YOU'LL SEE!)

>>>

«**Rocky:** (Oh no, no, no, darn, WE DO NEED TO CATCH THOSE TWO MONKEYS!), he exclaimed, scandalized after rejoining later.

In the following scenes, Jenny's quartet was in the same place where Diddy had fallen towards the dark slope. Everyone even tried to go down that slope carefully, although they didn't get that far down... The situation seemed to have taken a sudden turn.

«**Mandrew:** (Well, I don't see any traces of Diddy around here).

«**Jemky:** (Wait, wait, wait!... Did our dads really tell you that?!... How do they know those two monkeys?!)

«**Mandrew:** (YEAH! They told us that they do know them, AND THAT THEY WANT BOTH OF THEM NO MATTER WHAT! They say they have to settle the score with those monkeys!)

«**Melenky:** (Settle the score about what? And where do they know them from?)

«**Rocky:** (They say it's a long story, but that Dixie was also part of the animals they had here a long time ago, and that it was her family who ruined everything for them and left them in crisis for helping the animals escape! And that Diddy was the one who ruined the capture of Dixie and her

siblings... I take back what I said! WHERE IS THAT MONKEY?! He must have survived the fall, right?... AND DIXIE! Let's go to find her, no matter what!)

«**Melenky:** (Wait a minute!... During the time we became 'friends' with those two, Dixie had said something about how some apes held her family captive for a season and chased them to DK Island, until Diddy saved them... So, are you saying that those apes were our dads?)

«**Mandrew:** (Yeah! They are! But Dixie didn't tell us that many in-depth details; I didn't know).

«**Jemky:** (Hey... regarding the monkey, I honestly think he got lost or drowned; there is no trace of him in this dark ravine).

«**Rocky:** (Urgh, but WE NEED him! We have to catch him!... Blast! Or we'd better not have told our dads anything!)

«**Jemky:** (By the way, weren't you going to tell our dads to go catch them themselves?)

«**Rocky:** (The thing is that as soon as we showed them the photos of the two of them, they were startled and told us that they know them and that they also want them with the other children! And... we told them that we already had them kidnapped with the rest of the children... You know how they would get if we told them that we actually DO NOT have them kidnapped and that we cannot catch them on our own).

«**Jemky:** (Oh, well, so, what are we waiting for! Let's catch those two no matter what!)

«**Rocky:** (But we can't do it through these MECHANICAL MONKEYS either!)

«**Jemky:** (No problem! We can catch them! We're going to sail the ship soon; they won't have any time if they try to escape!)

«**Rocky:** (But first of all, Diddy fell down that hillside, and Dixie is going to destroy us if we kidnap her like that! We could catch her if we go by ourselves, but through these mechanical monkeys WE CANT!)

«**Melenky:** (Wait! And first of all, where is Dixie right now? Because she didn't seem to be at their house).

«**Jemky:** (We'll wait for her nearby, and when she arrives, we'll catch her!)

«**Rocky:** (Or never mind! We'll tell our dads to catch her!)

«**Jemky:** (I SAID NO! And much less now that our dads want those monkeys! They're going to want to kill us if we tell them we lost them!... Or unless they lend us their guns...)

(KIDS!), exclaimed an additional deep voice, at the same time as a door was heard opening and slamming shut. (You already have the ship and those little brats ready, right?! You can bring them now; we want them right now!)

There was silence for a while, where a heavy breathing could even be heard from the quartet.

«**Mandrew:** (Uhh, well... You see, we have a little proble-)

«**Jemky:** *(Uh, hey, of course! Everything is ready and... well...), he stammered with forced laughter. (Hey! Could you wait for us a little longer?! We still have to feed those children for the last time-)*

«**Rocky:** *(Oh, what happens is that those two monkeys that we show you in the photo-)*

«**Jemky:** *(NO!... I meant-)*

(Huh?! What's up with that pair of monkeys?! YOU CATCHED THEM, RIGHT?!)

«**Rocky:** *(NO!)*

«**Jemky:** *(YES!)*, he interrupted. *(Uhh, we do have those two, of course we do-)*

«**Rocky:** *(No, no, no, actually-)*

«**Jemky:** *(ROCKY! OF COURSE we caught them!)*

(One moment! ONE MOMENT!), exclaimed one of the adult apes, raising his voice. *(You did catch those two monkeys, right? Because we really want those two alive or dead!)*

«**Jemky:** *(Of course! We've got them-)*

(ROCKY! I want you to answer us!), one of the apes interrupted.

«**Rocky:** *(Well... well... Not really! You see, we don't even have them hypnotized; that mixture was already run out when we found them. But we had caught them, that is... we pretended to be their friends through these mechanized kids, but... they no longer want to be our friends, and we cannot go and catch them by force because these mechanical kids are fragile... and we wanted to ask you if... you could help us catch them or something... You have guns).*

(Wait, wait, what are you saying?!), one of the apes said, starting to speak in a threatening tone. *(WHAT DO YOU MEAN ABOUT US?! The mission is YOURS!)*

«**Rocky:** *(Yes, yes, yes, we know! But you see... those two monkeys are difficult to catch. In fact, we had captured the monkey but he escaped and even fell down a slope and we don't know if he is there or if he got lost... NO, NO, NO, DON'T BE ANGRY, PLEASE!)*

(HOW DID YOU LOSE THAT MONKEY?!), the adult apes began to shout. *(YOU TOLD US YOU ALREADY HAD THEM! We've needed those two monkeys for a long time! THEY'LL BE A JEWEL FOR US! WE WANT THEM ALIVE OR DEAD!)*

«**Melenky:** *(Yes, we did have them! But it's that... Oh, it's a long story! But in short: those two were dating, we tried to separate them, but they uncovered us and broke away from us).*

(Well, as far as I know, we sent you to catch some kong kids to bring them here, not to go around with dating nonsense! AND NOW YOU'RE TELLING ME THAT YOU'VE LOST A COUPLE OF MONKEYS THAT WE HOPED SO MUCH TO FIND?!)

«**Rocky:** *(Or I better think that you lend us your guns and then we can catch them ourselves! That monkey boy is too agile and the monkey girl is too strong).*

(Oh, no, no, NO GUNS! You just had to spray the hypnotizing mixture on those monkeys and that's all!)

«Mandrew: *(But we ran out of that a while ago!)*

(So, if you say you've already become their friends, tell them to get on the ship too!)

«Rocky: *(We are no longer friends with them! All because Jemky was the one who started wanting to make them fight!)*

«Jemky: *(HEY, WHY DO YOU NAME ME?!)*

(URGH, USELESS KIDS!), the apes shouted at them, very furious. (YOU CAN DO NOTHING RIGHT!)

«Melenky: *(HEY! BUT WE CATCH ALL THE OTHER CHILDREN ANYWAYS!)*

(BUT WE NEED THOSE OTHER TWO BRAT MONKEYS TOO!)

«Mandrew: *(SO, IF YOU WANT THEM SO MUCH, LEND US YOUR GUNS AND LET US GO AND CATCH THAT COUPLE!)*

(Beware that tone of voice, huh?), said one of the apes, speaking through clenched teeth.

(Oh, you know what?! We'd better go find that pair of monkeys, and by the way we'll bring those other brats on the ship).

(It seems to me! These four useless and ill-mannered boys might even WRECK THE SHIP).

«Mandrew: *(Oh, yeah? Well, it seems to me TOO! YOU SHOULD HAVE BETTER DO ALL THIS YOURSELVES FROM THE BEGINNING!)*

«Jemky: *(IT'S TRUE, YOU COULD WELL HAVE DONE THIS MISSION YOURSELVES AND EVEN IN LESS TIME, INSTEAD OF SENDING US!)*

Instantly, four consecutive blows were heard that sounded like slaps that, apparently, the apes had given the quartet.

«Melenky: *(But I didn't say anything!)*

«Rocky: *(Me neither!... Although now I do agree with Mandrew and Jem-)*

(SILENCE NOW!), the apes replied. (Let's go right now in our boats to Hurricane Island, we'll put those children on the ship while we also look for those other two monkeys, and then we'll set sail! And you'll have to help us look for them!)

«Jemky: *(Will we go too, right?), he asked them in a serious tone.*

(NO! Stay here! You'll help us to look for them through those mechanical kids!)

«Mandrew: *(So what's the joke!)*

(STAY HERE, I SAID!)

>>>

«**Rocky:** *(They're all ready!)*

«**Jemky:** *(Now let's wait for our dads to get there to go get that pair of monkeys... Oh, nothing fits those mandrills and orangutans!)*

The video recording showed the site of the ship where the quartet, through the other quartet, already had all the kidnapped kong children on board on the deck of the ship, and all of them continued to obey them until the end, without opposing their orders.

(Where are we going on this ship?), some of the children asked the quartet.

Rocky (RICKY): *(Uhh, we're going to start our trip; we'll visit some islands),* he responded, smiling at them through 'Ricky', while taking some vines. *(But first, everyone has to wear this, it's going to be a surprise).*

«**Rocky:** *(Now we have to tie each one of them).*

The quartet proceeded to take the vines and, to each of the kong children, they began to tie them from head to toe... and they allowed themselves to be tied up calmly.

>>>

(Okay, these brats are ready, now let's get those other two!)

Minutes later, the mandrills and orangutans had arrived at the ship's site, who had also been in charge of blindfolding all the kong children and forming them into lines. Likewise, they boarded a small boat on the ship, in which they had been transported to reach Hurricane Island. The group of apes wore their long dark hoods and cloaks to cover themselves.

(Now... we have to give these kids the second dose of hypnotizing mixture), the lead orangutan said.

Then, the apes took out small jars with a yellow-orange liquid, which they opened as they headed towards the kidnapped kong children. Then, each of the children had the mixture sprayed near their noses, which caused a reaction in them... until it left them almost paralyzed shortly after.

(With this they'll be quiet for a long time), the lead orangutan said.

(And where do those two monkeys live?!), one of the mandrills asked the quartet.

Jemky (JENNY): *(In a huge square treehouse that has a few rooms),* he responded to them, communicating through 'Jenny'. *(I'll show it to you if you want... although I doubt that pair are together right now. I don't know if Diddy is at the bottom of that ravine that we mentioned. And Dixie may be in the house, although I also doubt it because we recently went around there and there was no sign of either of them).*

(Then we'll split two and two to look for those little brats), the apes replied. *(We need two of you too to help us with each one).*

Melenky (MELVYN): *(I'll help you!)*

(NO! Let Jemky and Mandrew go with us for being sassy and bratty!)

>>>

Jemky (JENNY): *(Darn! I don't know where that monkey could be).*

Through Jenny's subscreen, the place on the dark ravine was shown where two of the apes had gone to the bottom with torches in hand, but they found no trace of Diddy.

(And now?!), the apes exclaimed, climbing back onto dry land. (WHY DID YOU NOT HOLD THAT MONKEY WELL WHEN YOU CAUGHT HIM?!)

Jemky (JENNY): *(Hey, this isn't the time to argue in the first place! And second, that monkey ran away and that's all! We'll have to look for him in the house then).*

(Show us the house and then go back to the ship, okay?!), the apes ordered him.

Jemky (JENNY): *(Yes, yes, whatever. But let's go), he answered them reluctantly.*

>>>

On the other hand, there was 'Mandy' along with two other apes in search of Dixie. They were not that far from Mr. Pinky's house; therefore, the search was not difficult for them.

Mandrew (MANDY): *(There's Dixie, that's her!), he whispered, pointing into the distance at Dixie.*

(Excellent! She's the same little monkey girl! Finally, we'll have her again!), the apes whispered too with excitement. (Okay, Mandrew, go talk to her calmly, we'll follow you).

«**Jemky:** *(Tell her Diddy doesn't love her anymore), he told him with a laugh. (Make something up there to make her disappointed in him once and for all).*

Mandy's subscreen showed Dixie, who was apparently crying while sitting on a rock; the reason for her tears was obvious.

«**Mandrew:** *(Oh, poor girl, she thinks her stupid boyfriend has gone with Jenny now), he commented mockingly.*

«**Jemky:** *(Or you mean... her boyfriend is gone forever because we can't find him anywhere).*

Mandrew (MANDY): *(Dixie?), she called, approaching her and pretending to be surprised.*

(Uh... Hi, Mandy), Dixie told her with a forced smile.

Mandrew (MANDY): *(Is something wrong with you?), she asked, going to sit next to her.*

(No... it's nothing), Dixie responded, smiling weakly and finishing wiping away her tears.

Mandrew (MANDY): *(Are you sure?... You look a little sad), she asked again feigning compassion.*

(It's okay, really).

Mandrew (MANDY): *(Is it because of... Diddy, right?)*

(Ugh... Yes, yes, I guess you already know that).

Mandrew (MANDY): *(Oh... Well, yes... Jenny told me... And from what she told me, it seems that Diddy now did give a chance to her... But first Diddy had broken up with you, right?)*

(Yes, it was so... and I don't want to talk about it, please), Dixie responded angrily, turning her back.

Mandrew (MANDY): *(I see... Uhh, and you... also had another boyfriend, right? That orangutan boy who liked you at school was your boyfriend and you hid it from Diddy?)*

(Hey, that's not true! Of course not!), Dixie exclaimed angrily. *(I didn't do anything wrong in case you've been told like that... Urgh, Diddy told it, right?!)*

Mandrew (MANDY): *(Well... he told Jenny, and Jenny told me. She told me that Diddy told her that you had sent a letter to that orangutan boy to come and see you and Diddy wouldn't know anythin-)*

(Nooo!), Dixie interrupted, very furious and beginning to shed tears again. *(That wasn't the case! I don't know how the heck that psychopathic orangutan appeared here!)*

Mandrew (MANDY): *(Well, that's what Jenny told me... In fact, she also told me that Diddy told her a lot of things about you).*

(What?! What else did he say?!)

Mandrew (MANDY): *(Well, he told her that you were a fake one, that now he hates you, that you were a total waste of time for him and he regrets everything he did for you... Jenny even told me that Diddy always thought she was cute, but that he never gave her a chance because of you)*

«**Jemky:** *(Oh, how fun this is!),* he commented while laughing. *(What a good made-up story, Mandrew!)*

(Ugh... Diddy Kong), Dixie said through clenched teeth and letting her tears fall. *(Why were we dating?)*

Mandrew (MANDY): *(But don't worry... That's how boys are... Don't feel bad, Dixie),* she added before giving her a hug. *(Remember that there are many more boys in the world. Maybe Diddy wasn't for you).*

(Hmm, there's the chimpanzee!), one of the adult apes said, appearing on the scene and scaring Dixie.

«**Mandrew:** *(Okay, here we go).*

«**Jemky:** *(Grab her hair first, Mandrew, so she won't attack you easily).*

Dixie, looking scared, stood up and took 'Mandy' by the arm to protect her and flee with her, but then, she grabbed her hair tightly, preventing her from escaping.

(What the-?!), Dixie exclaimed towards Mandy.

(Come here, girl!), both adult apes exclaimed as they caught Dixie.

(NO!... LET ME GO! WHO ARE YOU-)

The apes took out some vines and began to wrap everything around her, including her hair, and 'Mandy' helped them do it too. Those apes, being larger and having better techniques and strength to carry out a kidnapping, Dixie couldn't do anything to free herself. Then, the apes carried her away while 'Mandy' went along with them.

«Mandrew: *(We did it, we have Dixie!)*

«Rocky: *(Good! Did you see? I told you our dads could do it).*

«Jemky: *(Yes... and they're also going to give us the beating of our lives when they return because they can't find the monkey).*

(Calm down, little one... You'll just go back to where you should have stayed), one of those apes told her as he carried Dixie, and she tried to scream in extreme desperation in vain.

>>>

(The ship is going to sail! Come quickly!), one of the apes exclaimed, speaking into an intercom to contact the other apes in the group.

(Darn it! They can't find the monkey!), the other ape grumbled.

The scene showed the ship already on the sea, with all the kong children on board, including Dixie, who was the only one showing resistance and trying to free herself from the vines with which she was tied. Two of the apes were already on board along with the quartet of mechanical kong children.

Rocky (RICKY): *(So we'll go without that monkey?)*

(What else can we do? We're not going to get focused on just one miserable monkey... Ugh, but anyway, I really wanted to catch him and crush him for ruining our capture of the brat chimpanzee and her siblings).

Jemky (JENNY): *(We already have the chimpanzee girl anyways, don't complain anymore).*

(What did you say?!), the ape exclaimed, giving her a threatening look and being about to slap 'Jenny', but stopped. *(Oh, right, it's not you physically).*

Melenky (MELVYN): *(You can't hit us now; you're going to break a piece of these robots).*

(Yeah... but at home you all will see), the ape added, speaking through clenched teeth and threatening them with his gaze. *(Because we are not happy right now).*

Mandrew (MANDY): *(But it's not our fault; we don't know where that monkey is!)*

(Keep answering us like that and we'll truly give you a beating as soon as we see you!)

Then, the other two adult apes that had been away returned on board.

(We didn't find that monkey!), exclaimed another of the apes, arriving with another one at the ship. *(We even entered that house and there was nobody).*

(Oh, darn it, forget that monkey then! We have to set sail!)

The apes began preparing the ship to embark on the journey along with the quartet and the herd of kidnapped kong children.

Diddy, currently, only thought that if it hadn't been for the fact that he wasn't at the house right at that moment, he would have also been captured on that ship by those apes, and he wouldn't have even had the chance to rescue Dixie or plan how they would get out of there safely.

“And how did you infiltrate that ship, Diddy?” Dixie asked him.

“I was just arriving when I saw those apes hanging around Mr. Pinky's house and then I heard them mention the ship and I immediately ran over there. The entire trip I was held to the low sides of the ship so they couldn't see me.”

>>>

(Lower all these brats!)

The last scenes showed the islet where they were right now, where the ship was planted, and the apes, with the help of the quartet, were taking down the bags full of kong children and dragging them to the entrance of the building.

The apes were taking the children to the upper floors of the building, and taking them to the laboratory where Diddy had found them upon entering it.

The last thing the four subscreens showed was the quartet of mechanical children heading to the real quartet's room, and they were all seen with their electrode suits on and executing the same movements that the other quartet were replicating.

«**Jemky:** *(Now yes, that's all)*, he said as they stood the quartet in the corner of the room.

«**Rocky:** *(Let's take out the last rolls of magnetic tape to put them on the cassettes at once).*

The video recording ended with the quartet in front, shutting down the other quartet... and with that it all ended. Both Diddy and Dixie were left with thousands of thoughts in their minds after seeing all that...

Chapter End Notes

Finally, the video recordings are over! If you're wondering: and did Diddy and Dixie have so much time to see all that? Well, in one part it was mentioned that they saw those scenes in fast motion and that's all.

And yes, it was somewhat tedious to read all this, even for me it was tedious to write it... or well, copy it, paste it and organize it. My idea was to only make about five or ten pages about these recordings, but... they turned out to be about ninety :c and even in all the corrections I was making them more and more summary.

If you've made it this far, I thank you for your patience in reading! And hold on tight, because the next nine chapters will be very long too, but they'll continue the story. And don't worry... Diddy and Dixie will get out of here alive, and things won't go unpunished...

Chapter 67: A Stealth Plan

Chapter Notes

The next nine chapters will be very long, in fact, the next seven ones are like a single scene and what I did was divide it into chapters as I could.

Diddy and Dixie removed that last videocassette and put it in the drawer along with the others... All those video recordings left them with thousands of thoughts hovering in their minds, in turn that gave them an enormous indignation both because of the quartet for taking them for a fool and trampling on their relationship, as well as for the group of apes, who were beings without any drop of empathy and pity.

"Everything was... a lie with those four," Dixie said with her eyes lowered and holding back the feeling of humiliation. "I think this is worse than when we hear our so-called friends speaking badly about us."

"And those four stupid bullies," Diddy muttered as he was also consumed with indignation. "They *took us for fools!* All the time they took us for fools *and we could never notice!*" he added, throwing his cap to the floor and trampling it repeatedly.

"Ugh, I swear I feel like going out right now to *beat them up*, but we can't!" added Dixie, banging on the surface of the sideboard. "Oh, and that stupid orangutan burnt-hair *has nothing better to do, that lizard-head!*"

"And I swore all along that they would never know we were on Hurricane Island!" added Diddy, picking up his cap. "And it turns out that we have had contact with them *all these last weeks* as if nothing had happened... Oh, *no, no, nooo*. I would much rather hear those 'friends' we had talking badly about us again," he added, dropping his head on the sideboard.

"It's that... how could we distrust some... *children* who looked so helpless?" Dixie said, calming down and looking towards the 'Jenny and company' quartet, who remained static like dolls. Then, Dixie shuddered as she remembered what those kong children really were. "*Ugh, and those wretched apes...* How could they?! Why did they do that to... Jenny, Mandy, Melvyn and Ricky?! And they might not even be called that."

"Darn apes! They really are complete monsters! They have no feelings!" added Diddy in the same way. "So, literally Jenny, Mandy, Melvyn and Ricky are actually... real ones, but... *you know*."

"And you know what's the worst? That they plan to do the same to all those other children they have kidnapped!" Dixie exclaimed, putting her hands to her head, and then trying to calm down. "Oh, no, no, no. But why will they do that?! For what purpose would they do that?"

"Maybe they're planning to form some kind of army with... *those kids*," Diddy said pensively, as he shivered again. "Oh, no, but that band of apes really is psychopathic... How can they... turn children into... *robots*?"

"And all the time we were interacting with the four of them, swearing that they were ape kids just like us, and we never realized what they really are and what we had gotten ourselves into."

"And in the end, we were talking to those four fools Jemky and company... Urgh, and those stupid ones too! Not only did they take us for fools pretending to be our friends through Jenny and the others, but they also *made fun of us!*"

"You know? I hate those four ones... I hate them like you can't imagine! But... they also cause me pity; pity in the meaning of having seen where their bad blood comes from and that in the future, they'll probably follow the footsteps of their dads who are monstrous psychopaths."

"Don't be surprised; it didn't even cause them any pity when they were told what those mechanical children really are."

"Poor children..." Dixie said, watching Jenny's quartet again. "I don't want to imagine-"

Suddenly, there were continuous knocks behind the door of the room, while the lock sounded as if someone were trying to open it.

"Hide, hide!" Diddy hurriedly whispered to Dixie.

Both immediately went under the beds and stayed hidden for a while. Meanwhile, the door kept knocking.

"*Mandrew! Melenky! Open!*" Jemky's voice was shouting behind the door. Upon receiving no response, he continued to hit it harder after a minute. "*HEY, OPEN THE DOOR! WHAT DO YOU DO?!*"

"Did you call us?" Mandrew was then heard outside.

"But what the heck?!" Jemky exclaimed. "*And so, who is inside?! OPEN!*"

Jemky, apparently in the company of the rest of the quartet, knocked on the door louder and louder until they started to kick it.

"Darn, who secured the door?!" exclaimed Jemky again. "*OR WHO'S INSIDE?!*"

"What if it's those monkeys inside?!" Rocky was heard saying.

The four continued to bang on the door, while Diddy and Dixie didn't know what to do at the time.

"How do we get out of here?!" Dixie whispered as she was still hiding with Diddy.

"I say we open it and then hide, and as soon as they pass, we leave... It's the only alternative."

Diddy and Dixie came out of hiding and went to the door, then removed the security to it and pressed themselves against the wall immediately and then hid next to a piece of furniture. The quartet opened the door instantly, pushing it all the way that it even came close to hitting Diddy and Dixie.

"But what the heck was wrong with this door?!" Jemky exclaimed as they entered the room.

"Maybe the lock was stuck," Rocky added.

Diddy and Dixie, while the four of them didn't see them, were about to walk out the door... But unfortunately, Melenky, who was the last one to enter, closed the door as soon as he finished entering. Both had to sit still for the time being, while begging in their minds that the quartet wouldn't turn to see them.

"Or maybe here are the monkeys hidden!" Mandrew said. "Look under the beds and in the closets!"

The quartet immediately went to inspect under their beds and inside their closets. Meanwhile, Diddy and Dixie were tense even though they also wanted to give the four of them their comeuppance at that moment, especially Jemky, remembering all those humiliations they put them through.

"No, there are no monkeys around here," Melenky said, closing the closet door. "They may be outside."

Diddy and Dixie beckoned each other and, having no choice, went to the door and began to turn the knob quite slowly so that it would not make noise. Luckily, there was a sideboard next to it, which served to keep them out of sight of the quartet.

"But how did the monkey get here?" Rocky asked. "I swore he had fallen down that ravine and may even have drowned."

"Maybe he's already smooching with Dixie again somewhere here," Mandrew said.

"I don't think so; they both hate each other now," Jemky added before laughing. "Oh, poor dumb monkey, how could he believe all that? You had to see his face when I showed them the fake photos."

"But the best part was when Dixie found him with Jenny and thought he was dating her," Melenky added, laughing too. "Poor monkey, after Dixie didn't really do anything bad, he was left as an idiot."

"How did it feel to flirt with that monkey, Jemky?" Mandrew said, joining in the laughter.

"I didn't do that, you idiot!" replied Jemky, pushing Mandrew. *"I made Jenny flirt with him, it was so."*

Diddy and Dixie, resisting the urge to go out to confront them, managed to unlock the door and began to open it stealthily and then leave through it, trying not to make even the slightest noise or trip over any element.

"Hey, but the real question is also..." Melenky said after a while. "What the heck is Mr. Pinky doing around here?!"

Diddy and Dixie, being already outside the room, stopped when they heard that.

"I have no idea," Rocky was heard replying. "Maybe our dads have brought him here; I don't know what they wanted to do with him."

"Hey, I swore he was going to kill us," Jemky added. "What's more... he didn't even recognize us! Did they hypnotize him like those children?!"

"The good thing is that at least he doesn't seem to want to hurt us," Mandrew added. "But seriously, I have no idea what he's doing here either; it's the most random thing I've ever seen today... Or is Mr. Pinky a secret agent of our dads?!"

"No idea, I don't know either," Rocky continued. "Anyway, we'll ask our dads when they come back... And if they return happy with us."

Diddy and Dixie looked at each other with confused faces as well after hearing those words. Suddenly, they heard the footsteps of the quartet being nearby, so both immediately went to the same table where they had hidden before entering that room. Minutes later, the quartet also left, and then withdrew from the area.

"What do we do now?" Diddy asked quietly, hiding with Dixie.

"Uh... I don't know. I mean... we could go through that pipeline right now, but what about Mr. Pinky?... And about those other kids; what do we do with them?"

"Oh, it's that... I don't know what to do now either," Diddy added, frustrated and bowing his head before there was a moment of silence. "Oh, what did we get into, Dixie?... None of this would have happened if... I would have reported those four fools long ago. Seriously, nothing, nothing! We'd be on DK Island right now."

"No, Diddy!" interrupted Dixie, calming him down. "Never mind... Thinking about it... it wouldn't have been any use if you had... It would have been useless to report them... if their dads are *criminals* and they don't even treat them well as they should at least... And don't put all the blame on yourself, because I'm at fault in the first place for... having accepted that stupid deal and that threat from Jemky."

"But I'm at fault from the root, I mean... if I had acted in time, you wouldn't have met those fools and you wouldn't have gotten involved in any of this... Everything was only my problem, and I dragged you into it involuntarily."

"But don't say that, Diddy; of course I don't think that about you," replied Dixie. "And also, just think: if we reported those four, obviously Wrinkly would have contacted their dads to 'control' them and... I don't think things would have ended well if those psychopathic mandrills and orangutans were reproached."

"But it's that... Oh, I don't know what else to think," Diddy said, crossing his arms and looking away with his eyes lowered.

"Oh, I really don't know either," Dixie added in the same way before there was another moment of silence. "But anyway... Nothing can be changed anymore."

"And we won't get anything if we stay here; we have to do something," Diddy said before poking his head off the table and looking everywhere. Then, he hid again and made a gesture of concern. "Dixie... we have to get those kids out of here too... or they'll end up like Jenny and company."

"It's true, we can't allow those monstrous apes... do the same to them. We must also take them to the pipeline! They'll be able to leave there without problems."

"But first we have to get them out of that cell where they're locked up," Diddy added, still pensive. "We just have to be careful not to be seen by those four fools. The big apes have left this building

right now, so we have plenty of time. We'll take those kids to the pipeline and hide them out there and... and then what?"

"The ship!" Dixie added. "We could hide them there, inside the cabins so that they're not seen. And then we steer the ship towards the exit of this islet and return to Hurricane Island. There we'll take the children to the animal shelter."

"Sounds good," he replied before poking his head back off the table and looking around. "And we'd better go right now, before those evil apes come back."

Dixie poked her head out of the table too as they watched everywhere to make sure there was no presence nearby.

"Let's go there!" Diddy whispered, pointing to a direction.

They both came out of hiding and started heading towards the end of that corridor. They were walking fast, but at the same time stealthily and looking everywhere continuously in case one of the quartet was not seen.

"Diddy," Dixie whispered as they walked and looked around.

"What's up?"

"And after all... how did Mr. Pinky get here?"

Diddy stopped instantly, and Dixie did the same. They both looked at each other with confused faces the moment Dixie asked that question... In *none* of the video recordings did they remember hearing what happened to him, or at least in the scenes they managed to see, no.

"It's true... we couldn't know that!" Diddy exclaimed, looking more confused. "How strange... What happened to him then?! At what point did those apes catch him?"

"*They caught him...*" Dixie repeated in a pensive tone... before opening her eyes to the fullest after having an assumption. "Hey, or maybe he... really was hypnotized by those apes too? I'm saying it because he didn't even recognize us or anything."

Diddy was paralyzed too upon hearing Dixie's assumption, even supplementing his own assumptions.

"W-what...?" Diddy said, starting to worry more. "And so, that means that Mr. Pinky... Will they also want to turn him into a robot?!"

"It can't be!" Dixie exclaimed in the same way. "We have to get him out of here then! No matter what!... But how?"

"How are we going to get him out of here?... " Diddy asked pensively. "Oh, shoot, I don't know. And it's even dangerous."

"Oh, and so, what do we do with him?" Dixie wondered in a tone of uncertainty. "And besides... why is he carrying a gun too?"

Both of them were still quite worried as they tried to come up with a quick plan, while also keeping an eye on all sides. That question continued to reverberate in them and they only kept thinking

about how they would get Mr. Pinky out of there, since he would be almost impossible for them to rescue due to the state in which he was.

"What if we wrap him with his same cloak and take away the gun he carries?" Diddy wondered. "And then we could direct him to the pipeline as well... Oh, right, I don't think he's going to fit there; we'll have to take him out the front door."

They continued walking until they reached the end of that corridor. Arriving at the corner, they peeked out to see if no one came down the next corridor, and then continued to walk stealthily.

"And by the way, we also have to protect ourselves from him," Diddy whispered on the way. "Recently, he was ready to shoot us like nothing."

"Those blasted apes must have captured him on that island where he had gone," Dixie supposed. "Because even those four fools seemed to know nothing about him, and as if they had recently noticed his presence too."

"So, it must not have been so long that those apes caught him," Diddy added.

Both were reaching the end of that second corridor. They peeked out the corner again and looked to the side to make sure no one was around. When suddenly, they turned to look at the other side and, to bad surprise... they bumped into someone.

"What the?! *The monkeys!*" Melenky appeared right in front of them.

Diddy and Dixie, without thinking about it, started running instantly in the opposite direction and then aimlessly.

"*THE MONKEYS!*" Melenky shouted, starting to run after them at the same time. "*Come here, pair of dumbs! JEMKY, ROCKY, MANDREW, HERE ARE THE MONKEYS!*"

"*Oh, no, no, no, they're going to find us out!*" Dixie exclaimed as she ran with Diddy as fast as their limbs could give them.

"*I'M GOING TO CATCH YOU, DUMB MONKEYS!*" Melenky exclaimed as he chased them at the same speed.

Diddy and Dixie, not knowing what direction they were taking, ran and crossed the different corridors that were in their way. They had even lost their way, and were already beginning to get frustrated. Meanwhile, Melenky kept running after them; this one was so agile too, that Diddy and Dixie had no chance of diverting to other corridors.

They managed to go around the corridors until they passed through the quartet's room again. Suddenly, Diddy grabbed Dixie's arm, causing them both to slam on the brakes.

"*But what?!*" Dixie exclaimed instantly.

"Wait!" Diddy said, who suddenly stood still as he watched Melenky head towards them.

"What are you doing?! Run!" Dixie replied, pulling his arm.

"No!" Diddy replied without looking away from Melenky. "Come, let us enter their room again; we have to stop him!" he whispered to Dixie.

Diddy took Dixie's hand, and they both ran into the quartet's room, shortly before Melenky reached it as well.

"Let's face him, Dixie!" Diddy whispered. "Like when we were in school; we have no choice now."

Dixie, being doubtful at first, caught Diddy's idea and nodded. Within seconds, Melenky entered.

"COME HERE, MONKE-"

Diddy and Dixie immediately rushed towards Melenky and grabbed him by the limbs, while Melenky resisted them and tried to fight back.

"NO, LET ME-"

"Silence!" Diddy ordered him as they tried to stop him.

Diddy knocked Melenky to the floor by pressing a little on his chest and, immediately, Dixie wrapped her hair around his snout so that he couldn't speak; while Melenky tried to kick them both, but they managed to dodge him.

"Let's lock him in the closet!" Diddy exclaimed.

Diddy grabbed Melenky's feet, while Dixie held him by the arms and torso while keeping his snout closed with her hair. Then, they began to move him quickly to one of the closets, with some difficulty because Melenky tried to get out of them as best he could.

"Lock him up!" Diddy said.

Diddy and Dixie put Melenky inside the closet, but he began to hit both as soon as they let him go.

"No! Stay still!" Dixie exclaimed, hitting him back along with Diddy.

"Stupid monkeys!" Melenky yelled at them as he kept trying to get out, but Diddy and Dixie blocked his way.

"Stay still!" Diddy replied, pushing him harder into the closet. Melenky slapped Diddy, but Diddy returned a single one to his face. "I said stay still... *Melvyn!*"

"W-what?!" Melenky exclaimed, being shocked to have been called that, but then he smiled mockingly at them and laughed. "Did you recently find out about that?! *Fools!* Already because the silly love you both had was ruined."

Diddy and Dixie grumbled instantly and each slapped Melenky again, then closed the closet doors, leaving him trapped inside. Melenky tried to push the doors in, but Diddy and Dixie were holding them and struggling to keep him from letting him out.

"Hold the doors, I'm going to knock it down!" Diddy told Dixie.

While Dixie held back the doors so Melenky wouldn't open them, Diddy climbed to the top of the closet and leaned against the wall before pushing it with his feet to the front. Dixie stopped exerting force and immediately pulled away when the closet fell to the floor, locking the doors against the floor.

"Darn MONKEYS!" Melenky shouted from inside the closet and banged the walls of the closet.
"LET ME OUT... HELP ME! JEMKY! MANDREW! ROCKY!"

"Now, let's run!" Diddy whispered to Dixie.

Both kongs left the room as fast as they could and closed the door. Then, they resumed the way to the staircase of the building. This time, they headed somewhat faster, but at the same time, they were peeking into every corner of the corridors they met.

"Almost there, it's this way," Diddy said.

They reached the area of the huge main staircase, which led to all the other floors of the building. They looked all around and headed towards the stairs to start climbing. They didn't have any mishaps on the way, so they managed to easily reach the room where the cells were, in which the herd of kong children was locked.

"Wait!" Dixie whispered to Diddy, stopping him. "And how are we going to get those kids out? I mean... There are quite a few."

"Don't worry, they're hypnotized as the apes said. We'll tell them to accompany us and they'll follow us. When I came here, I tried to talk to them; they're very quiet."

Diddy and Dixie continued on their way and went to the cell where the kidnapped kong children were kept. All of them were so quiet that they even looked almost the same as Jenny's quartet. None of these children spoke, and they just looked at Diddy and Dixie as if they were strangers who didn't even care.

"Hey!" Diddy whispered to the cell. "We're going to get you out of here. I want you to follow us to a pipelin-"

"Diddy!" Dixie interrupted quietly. "It's that... remember that this cell opens with that button and we can't press it," she added, pointing to the button at the entrance to the room.

"Oh, no! It's true," Diddy complained in the same tone. "What if we push it anyway?"

"An alarm will be triggered! And it won't open," Dixie replied.

"And then?" Diddy exclaimed, before he heard anything. "Wait! That's... Hide!"

Diddy took Dixie's hand and they left that room for a while. As they were about to go down the stairs, they noticed that, speeding up the stairs, there was Rocky.

Both went to the balcony of that staircase and, subsequently, Dixie climbed on the handrails and then took Diddy and went down to the lower floors with the help of her hair. Upon arrival, they looked up and could see Rocky entering the cell room.

"Oh, no, and now?" Diddy asked, his hands at his sides and thinking for a while.

"What if we go to see any of those four... *mechanical kids*?" Dixie suggested. "When you took me out of that cell, it worked with Jenny to open them."

"But how do we bring one of them here?"

"We can carry him off... It may be Melvyn; he has to weigh less."

"There is no other choice," Diddy replied with a shrug, before looking everywhere. "Well, let's go fast."

Both headed back towards the quartet's room, trying not to meet anyone. It was not complicated at all this time, so they could pass without problems and go straight to Jenny's quartet. The atmosphere was all silent, until later repetitive blows were heard inside the closet where Melenky had been locked up; they were so strong that they were heard like a wild animal wanting to escape from a prison.

"MANDREW... JEMKY... ROCKY... IS THAT YOU?!" he exclaimed as he beat the closet. *"GET ME OUT OF HERE, DARN IT!"*

"Hurry! Let's take Melvyn and leave!" Diddy whispered to Dixie.

Both went to where Melvyn was and took him by the torso to place him lying on the floor. Then, Diddy took him by the arms and Dixie by the feet. They lifted him in weight and started leaving the room with him immediately. They closed the door, looked everywhere and started heading towards the stairs again.

"Almost there!" Diddy exclaimed as he ran quickly along with Dixie, carrying Melvyn off. They stopped at the moment of having reached the foot of the stairs. "Stay here with Melvyn; I'll go and inspect if Rocky has already left."

Dixie stood by the foot of the stairs with Melvyn, holding him by the arms. Meanwhile, Diddy went up to the floor where the cell room was located; Rocky's presence no longer seemed to be around, so he peeked out of the balconies and beckoned Dixie to follow. He started to go down again... When suddenly, he felt someone pull his arm.

"Here you are, huh?!" Rocky exclaimed, holding Diddy by the arms to stop him, as he struggled to let go. Then Rocky started yelling. *"I FOUND THE MONKEY! JEMKY! MANDREW! MELENK-"*

Suddenly, Diddy gave him a single hit to get him to let go, to the point of almost making him fall off the stairs.

"Fool monkey!" Rocky exclaimed, rising and lunging at Diddy.

Diddy gathered his courage this time and, almost instantly, gave Rocky a strong push back. But likewise, Rocky lunged again and pushed him, causing him to fall back from the steps. Luckily, Dixie had arrived in time and managed to hold Diddy.

Immediately, both pounced on Rocky and, like Melenky, knocked him to the floor and then grabbed him by the limbs.

"NO, Darn YOU, LET GO OF ME!" shouted Rocky, trying to free himself from them and shake his limbs. *"JEMKY! MELENKY! MANDR-"*

"Silence!" Dixie ordered him, rolling her hair to his snout to shut him up.

Diddy and Dixie immediately set out to take Rocky off the stairs. During the descent, Rocky was pulling the hands of the two, causing them to almost trip several times.

"Quick, under the stairs there is a small door!" Diddy said as they finished going downstairs. "We'll lock him up there."

Both went to a door under the first group of steps of that staircase, which appeared to lead to a small storage room. Diddy, trying not to let Rocky let go, opened the door. They let Rocky go and pushed him into that small storage. But likewise, Rocky tried to pounce on the two of them as soon as they let him go.

"You're not going to leave here, monkeys! And what the heck are you doing with Melvyn here?!"

"Go back inside, snowy head!" Diddy exclaimed, pushing him harder into the storage.

"Darn dwarf monkey!" Rocky countered by lunging to hit Diddy repeatedly.

"Inside, I said!" Diddy replied, slapping and pushing him back, making him fall backwards. "You all treated me this way yesterday... *Ricky!*"

"Did you call me... *Ricky?*!" Rocky exclaimed, getting up and starting to laugh. "But how could you be so foolish not to notice it all the time?! And you even fell for that traps that-"

Instantly, Diddy slammed the door at him, leaving him locked and pushing the door so he wouldn't try to get out, in addition to holding the knob so he wouldn't open it.

"STUPID MONKEY, GET AWAY!" Rocky shouted behind the door, punching and shoving it as Diddy continued to hold it.

"Wait for me here!" Dixie said to Diddy.

Dixie quickly headed to another corner under the stairs, where some wooden tables were piled up. She took a small one with her hair and a larger one dragging her away, and then returned to where Rocky had been locked up. Diddy kept holding back the door so that Rocky couldn't get out, and Dixie hurriedly piled the two tables against the door. Then, both went for other tables and piled them up towards the door as well.

"DARN IT! LET ME OUT!" shouted Rocky, banging wildly on the door without success.

"Now! Quick, to the cells!" Diddy whispered to Dixie.

Diddy and Dixie headed back up the stairs, carrying Melvyn by his limbs. They then went straight to the cells where the kidnapped kong children were being held.

"This does have to work," Dixie said, leading Melvyn to the button that opened the cells.

Dixie took Melvyn's hand and placed one of his fingers over the button to press it. Instantly, the bars of all the cells in that room opened.

"Well, it's now or never!" Diddy whispered towards the herd of kong children. "Listen to me, everyone... You can understand me, right?"

The kong children just continued still and gave empty glances at Diddy and Dixie as if they seemed like strangers to them.

"Hey, don't you remember us?" Dixie asked. "We're Diddy and Dixie... those who were friends of Jenny, Mandy, Ricky and Melvyn, and with whom we built that ship," she added, waiting for a response from the kids, but they continued in the same way.

"Perhaps they ran out of effect and are 'crazy' now as those four fools mentioned in those video recordings" Diddy questioned.

"But they must still be able to take orders," Dixie replied with a shrug, before turning to the children. "Hey, everyone! I want you all to raise your hands right now!"

Instantly, the herd of kong children raised their hands together, as if they were an army.

"Yes, it works!" Diddy exclaimed, getting excited for a while. "Okay, so let's tell them to follow us to the pipeline."

"Listen to me, everyone!" Dixie said to the herd, trying to speak loudly to them but also trying not to make so much noise. "We're all going to get out of here. You just follow us; we go down the stairs and we will go to a pipeline where you are going to move to be able to leave this building. Then, you head towards the ship and we leave this island... Did you understand?"

The children continued to look at them the same way for a while, but then they began to nod their heads slightly.

"Okay, then come and follow us!" Diddy ordered them, beckoning them to accompany them. But later, he stopped them. "One minute!... Of course, do not separate from us at any time, and hide immediately if you see someone walking nearby, okay?"

The herd nodded, this time with attitude, and they set out to follow the two of them.

"What do we do with Melvyn?" Dixie asked.

"Right, we'll have to take him back, but we can just leave him near the pipeline."

Diddy and Dixie took Melvyn by the limbs again, gave the order to the herd, and resumed the walk. They peeked out of the balcony to make sure no one came up, and started going downstairs along with the herd of kong children behind them. These children were following them without problems, so Diddy and Dixie didn't have any mishaps. Although at the same time... they only thought about the submissive state in which these children were; they found it so disturbing to think that the group of evil apes could do the same to them as to Jenny's quartet, in addition to thinking that the families of these children wouldn't even imagine where they are.

When they reached the second floor of the building again, they went to the exit of that room and made sure that no one was around.

"STUPID MONKEYS!" Rocky shouted from inside the storage where he was locked, savagely banging on the door and causing a scare to the entire herd, including the two of them. *"I KNOW YOU'RE OUT THERE, LET ME OUT, DARN YOU!"*

"No, no, don't listen to him!" Diddy whispered to the herd repeatedly. "Don't give importance to that crazy one who is screaming, just follow us!"

Diddy and Dixie got out of that room and beckoned the herd to follow them. Everyone began to walk through the corridors, trying much more carefully that no one caught them, because what they were doing now was a high-risk action. Diddy and Dixie just prayed that everything would go well and not fail with a fatal outcome.

Apparently, they didn't have any problems on the way, and they were already approaching the pipeline where they would take out the kong children.

"There it is!" Dixie pointed to the pipeline in the distance, while being excited for a moment along with Diddy. "Quick, we almost made it!"

Finally, Diddy and Dixie had made it to the pipeline along with the herd. Both could not believe it and felt excited in that instant to see that the plan had not gone so badly... When suddenly, that excitement vanished again little by little when they took a better look at the duct... *This was blocked.*

"But..." Diddy said, feeling a great disappointment instantly along with Dixie.

The duct was with a small door that blocked the passage. Diddy opened it and what was found inside caused him a small fright and disgust at the same time: the inside of the pipeline was infested with a massive amount of millipedes running along the walls of it; there were so many that it made them shudder just to look at it.

"Oh, what a horror," Dixie said, covering her eyes.

"Wait a minute! And look at this," Diddy added when he noticed something at the door.

Written in ink and in bad handwriting, there was a phrase on the inside of the small door that said: *'You never will leave here, stupid monkeys'*

"Ugh, that quartet of idiots!" Diddy grumbled, closing the door immediately. "It must have been them, no doubt about it."

"Shoot! And now where do we get out?!" Dixie wondered, watching everywhere.

"We'll go out the front door then," Diddy said.

"That one also opens up with someone who is from here!" Dixie said. "And not only that, there are also invisible lasers in that hall leading up to that door."

"And then what?" Diddy replied as he thought of another alternative.

Suddenly, footsteps began to be heard nearby in one of the corridors that were on the sides. Diddy immediately went to peek out of the corner and hid almost instantly, as he returned to Dixie with a horrified face.

"It's Mr. Pinky!" he exclaimed in extreme desperation as he took Dixie's arm and beckoned the herd of kong children. *"Run, everyone, please! Follow us or we'll be massacred!"*

Diddy and Dixie set out to run in a hurry, while the rest of the kongs were following them at the same speed. Both looked back at every moment to make sure that Mr. Pinky didn't catch them, since now they also feared for the safety of those children. Fortunately, they managed to get far

enough away to detour through other corridors, where there was no longer anyone else. Then, they all stopped in a corner where they could stay safe for a while.

"Oh, now what do we do?!" Diddy exclaimed, becoming more desperate as they had a herd of kong children now in their care.

"What if we took them all out of a window?" Dixie suggested quickly.

"Oh, no, no, no! They can hurt themselves, Dixie. And besides, the windows are all barred."

"Or I got it!... What if we hide them in that basement?"

"What?! But there someone can find them."

"I don't think so; the evil apes hardly walk around that place. And they're unlikely to assume these kids would be there. Meanwhile, we'll think or look for another way out or plan some mode of escape; we can't do anything else for now."

Diddy, not so sure but at the same time having no choice, agreed to Dixie's idea. He gave the signal to the herd to follow them, and they immediately went to the entrance of that basement, where they had both hidden from Mr. Pinky.

"Quick, over here!" Dixie ordered the herd as they were approaching the door to the basement.

Dixie opened the door and made them all the children enter one by one. At the end, she also entered along with Diddy and, immediately, they began to direct the herd down the extensive stairs, ensuring that none of them would trip due to the darkness. Getting all the way to the basement floor, they made sure that all the kong children were complete and stood still.

"Listen, everyone!" Dixie told them. "You're going to stay here, don't move anywhere or make any noise. We'll come in later and get you all out of here, okay?"

In the darkness, the herd was seen nodding to what they were told. Diddy and Dixie just hoped everything would work out, and headed back upstairs.

When they reached the door again, they peeked through it and left immediately.

"Now!" Dixie whispered as they mobilized. "Let's go downstairs to see if there is any other way out."

Both went to the main staircase room, where as soon as they arrived, they heard Rocky banging on the door of the storage in which they locked him.

"DARN IT, YOU NUMBSKULL MONKEYS! HOW MUCH ARE YOU DOING?! OPEN!"

Diddy and Dixie felt like answering him, but instead, they passed by and ignored him; they hardly felt they had time to get to answer and argue. Then, they went down to the first floor of the building where they would start looking for an alternative route to get all the kidnapped kong children out.

"Are you sure we can't get out the front door?" Diddy asked Dixie as they began to walk down the first floor.

"Diddy... Chunky and my aunt and uncle tried to get out there that time, and those apes found them thanks to those invisible laser beams in that area."

"But are they really so invisible?" Diddy questioned.

"Yes, if you want, let's go and you'll see... Well, I haven't seen, only Chunky told us."

Both went to a corridor where the main entrance of the building would be located. Upon arrival, they realized that, indeed... no laser beam was visible.

"Uhh... are you really sure?" Diddy continued, unable to believe it, before starting to walk towards the corridor. "The truth is that no trace of laser beams is seen."

"No, Diddy!" Dixie exclaimed, stopping him instantly. "If you go through there, an alarm will sound!"

"But I don't understand it, I mean, I can't see anything. How do you know that there are laser beams?... Shouldn't they be red?"

"They appear once you touch them, Chunky told us... He told us that as soon as they walked there, those red rays began to come out and an alarm was activated, and that made the apes arrive instantly to catch them ..." Dixie began to wipe her eyes after answering and, suddenly, the memory of that terrible event began to invade her, so she decided to move away so as not to look at that area of the building. "We have to find another way out," she added in a somewhat brittle voice.

"Oh... no, no, I'm sorry, Dixie," Diddy hurriedly told her as he followed her to try to comfort her at what she had just mentioned. "Forgive me, I didn't want you to remember any of that and-"

"Hey, you don't have to apologize, Diddy, you didn't say anything bad," Dixie said, looking at him still with tears in her eyes, but at the same time, trying to stay strong. "It's just that I can't look at that place, in fact... this whole building," she added, inevitably dropping a couple of tears.

Diddy felt an enormous pity for her, despite it wasn't the first time he had seen Dixie that way. He just hugged her for a moment and then stared at her as she continued to shed tears from her eyes.

"No, don't worry, let's keep looking for another way out," Dixie said, finishing wiping her eyes, before resuming the way.

Diddy, without saying another word, set out to follow her, while Dixie continued to try to restrain herself; she felt that at that moment she must try to be strong if she wanted to get out of there, even if she was in a place that brought back those terrible memories. They both continued to walk on that floor while still observing if there was another way to get the kong children out of that building.

"Wait, wait, wait!" Diddy whispered, stopping Dixie suddenly. Then, he stared to the front where there was another corridor perpendicular to where they were walking. "I think I saw someone passing by... Let's be careful!"

The two walked stealthily and clanged to the wall as they advanced to the end of that corridor where they were. Even so, they didn't care so much if it was one of the bully quartet, since they were sure that they could face them without consequences this time.

"Almost there," Diddy whispered before he was about to reach the corner. "We'll observe here-"

Suddenly, both of them were startled, at the same time they felt their blood circulating sharply: in front of them, and still wearing dark clothes and a gun in hand, *Mr. Pinky appeared*.

"*RUN, LET'S RUN!*" Diddy shouted in terror along with Dixie before starting to run instantly.

Both kongs used their four limbs at the maximum speed they had to run in the opposite direction. They looked back between moments and their pulsations accelerated when they saw Mr. Pinky chasing them without stopping, and he was even pointing the gun at them on the way.

"*DOWN!*" shouted Diddy, crouching for a few seconds along with Dixie as Mr. Pinky began to unleash a couple of shots to the front.

Luckily, they both managed to cross that corridor and divert to another. They managed to do the same thing over and over again until they lost sight of Mr. Pinky apparently... Not before they reached one of the corridors, where when turning in the corner of this, the teacher reappeared and caused them another fright immediately.

Diddy and Dixie, not knowing where they were running, fled in terror from him. Suddenly, and without them clearly noticing where they were going, red and luminous lines began to appear around them, in addition to a deafening sound began to resonate in that area. Both, while covering their ears, looked straight ahead and realized that they had been heading towards the front door, which began to lock with other doors automatically.

"*Let's get out of here, QUICK!*" Dixie exclaimed, taking Diddy's arm and starting to get out of there.

Suddenly, Mr. Pinky appeared in front again and pointed the gun at them instantly. Diddy and Dixie, out of survival instinct, ignored his presence and passed near him to flee again.

"*Urgh, when will we be able to do everything without any problem?!*" Dixie exclaimed as they kept running.

Both were running through another of the corridors, when for bad luck, they managed to see and hear two figures passing through the next perpendicular corridor. They stopped in their tracks so as not to make noise, while begging that they couldn't see them.

"Those two dwarfs won't escape this time! They believe they can leave through the front door!" Jemky, who was walking in long strides with Mandrew, exclaimed. "Oh, I better look for some of Dad's guns, I know they must have others hidden somewhere!"

"Where did *Rocky and Melenky* get into, *by the way?!*" Mandrew added, grumbling.

Diddy and Dixie were about to head in the opposite direction of that corridor, when suddenly, they managed to see Mr. Pinky staring at them. Having nowhere else to flee, Diddy and Dixie went to a double door in that corridor, opened it without problems, and hid in that room and then slammed and secured it. The door had high windows through which anyone could see out, so they both climbed up to look behind those windows... But as soon as they did, they caught Mr. Pinky staring at it, so they immediately went down and hid in the first hiding corner they saw. Almost a minute later, savage banging on the doors began to resound as if someone were trying to enter by force.

Diddy and Dixie, clinging between the two in the hiding corner, stayed to wait in case Mr. Pinky would give up insisting on entering, while also praying that he wouldn't succeed.

A couple of minutes later, the banging stopped being heard, and everything fell into absolute silence. Diddy, hesitating a little to do so, went to the door and peeked out of the windows again.

"He already left," Diddy whispered before going down.

Dixie, who was under a countertop, went out too and met Diddy again. Looking around that room, they realized that it looked like a *kitchen*... It was even the first room, apart from the quartet's room, which had colored walls, from yellow to reddish tones. It had several large countertops, in addition to some strange metal devices, since the latter had an appearance of being sharp.

"It feels very... strange here," Diddy commented as he watched the whole room. After a few seconds, he peeked out of the high door window again. "Well, let's get out of here-"

But not even two seconds passed when Mr. Pinky's face appeared clung behind the window, causing a huge scare to Diddy, who came down instantly upon seeing him.

"Wait, don't move!" Dixie whispered, holding Diddy's arm. "I think... he's not seeing us."

Mr. Pinky, behind the door, just looked out the small window as if he were trying to look inside, because his gaze seemed to be lost and without locating Diddy and Dixie, even though they were in front.

"I think he can't see in here from the outside," Dixie said quietly.

Then, Mr. Pinky was trying to open the doors again and even banged on them, but fortunately, Diddy and Dixie had left them secured. Later, the teacher stopped struggling with the door, but still, he remained clung to it and trying to look inside.

"Oh, isn't there another way to get out of here?" Diddy asked, heading towards other corners of that room. "By the way... it smells very ugly here, do you also perceive it?" he added, covering his nose.

"I was going to tell you the same thing," Dixie replied in the same way and making a gesture of disgust. But then... she could guess what was the reason for that foul smell that both began to perceive. "Oh, no, no. I think I know what place this room is... Maybe this is where... those apes exterminate the animals."

Diddy opened his eyes to the fullest and moved a little away from the corner where he was inspecting.

"W-what?!" Diddy exclaimed, now understanding why there were so many metal and sharp objects on the countertops. "*Oh, what a horror*," he said after imagining some disturbing events. "That also explains why... the countertop has reddish spots."

"Yes... you can imagine," Dixie said in the same way as they resumed the search for an alternative escape route.

Both continued to inspect the room to find some exit, because they couldn't get out of there, since Mr. Pinky was still leaning on the door window.

Suddenly, in the middle of the inspection, Dixie came across a book that was on one of the counters. It could go unnoticed and not catch her attention at all, if not because the cover had handwritten words, accompanied by poorly made drawings... Dixie opened it quickly and what she found was almost the same: a lot of manuscripts and drawings, apparently made with very low quality, but at the same time, transmitted a certain disturbance.

"But what is that?" asked Diddy, curiously turning to look at the book Dixie was skimming through. "*General instructions*," read the title.

"Oh, no... It can't be," Dixie said, shocked when she stopped to read an excerpt.

The book appeared to be an instruction manual from the group of mandrills and orangutans, where there were articles with guides for various procedures that this group did to the animals they caught; among them, there were instructions on how to remove some vital organ or even recipes on how to prepare meals with those animals... and other strange experiments, as Dixie had told long ago; she knew something about it halfway, but now she could confirm it.

"But what...?" said Diddy as they read the manuscripts quickly.

Those paragraphs generated enormous discomfort and disturbance to both, because they contained grotesque graphics and instructions that in turn, seemed to be written by someone without any drop of mercy. All the articles contained almost the same, they only differed in that the procedures were carried out differently depending on the animal species... But what most caught their attention was that at the end of that book there was something very curious, something entitled '*Kongs Mechanization Plan*'.

"Oh, no..." Dixie said as they glanced at those pages.

The pages contained what appeared to be the process of how the apes may have intervened in the *quartet of mechanical children*. The graphics that were there were even about some kong children... children who looked identical to 'Jenny', 'Mandy', 'Melvyn' and 'Ricky'. Diddy and Dixie shuddered just to read the subtitles of the instructions, which, arranged numerically, read:

'1. Supply the hypnotizing elixirs to the kong to erase its memory and senses.

2. Using the star scalpel, make a superficial cut on its thumb to examine its blood.

3. Proceed to the insertion of motion sensors.

4. Make the mixture with quartz.

5. Depending on the blood type of the kong, insert the quartz mixture intravenously. This will give it artificial vitality and naturalness when moving.

6. Place the cameras in its eyes, the operation buttons and the power supply box inside its head.

7. Cure it with the healing elixir.

8. Refrigerate it for one day.

9. Turn it on and set it in motion with the electrode suits.'

Each of the subtitles of the steps contained in greater detail how to carry them out, but that was more grotesque to read, that Diddy and Dixie desisted in doing it. Finally, there were a few final warnings that read:

'Do not allow it to have direct contact with water; they may suffer failures or short circuits.

-You can make inspections and adjustments by pressing the button on its left ear to open its head.

-Do not let it suffer falls and blows.

-Make it work constantly for approximately two months so that it acquires autonomy at the time of carrying out the procedure of 'immortality' with emerald and sapphires.'

"Oh, no. This is... *aberrant*," Dixie commented as she processed what they had just read.

"No, no, those apes are definitely heartless," Diddy added indignantly. "And they plan to do the same with those other children!"

"By the way... and what are they supposed to use that emerald for?" asked Dixie, checking the last few pages. "*Steps for the immortality' of the mechanized kongs*," she read in the title before reading the subtitle. "*The kong will have autonomy of its own as if it were alive again.*"

"What?!" Diddy asked in confusion. "So... do they do all this atrocity to them and then they want to revive them? But why on earth will they do all this?... And how do they plan to 'revive' them, by the way?"

"Well, there are only four steps here," Dixie said, checking at the page. "But it's with that emerald that they wanted so much... The procedure doesn't look as complex as it seem-"

"Are you telling me that here are those two monkeys?!" a voice was heard that belonged neither of them.

Suddenly, struggles began to be heard again behind the door. Diddy and Dixie went to look out the door window and saw Mr. Pinky accompanied by *Mandrew* wanting to open the door. Then, they immediately got off and ran to hide under the counters.

"Now what?" Dixie whispered to Diddy.

"Hmm, we can face that stupid mandrill boy, but not Mr. Pinky, at least not if he carries a gun."

Mandrew continued to struggle with the door and started banging on it.

"Darn, the door doesn't open!" Mandrew exclaimed, kicking it. "Mr. Pinky, are you sure those monkeys came in here?"

"Yes," Mr. Pinky was heard speaking coldly but firmly at the same time.

"You know what? Better go get them somewhere else," Mandrew told him. "I'll stay here in case they get out or are nearby."

Diddy and Dixie sneaked out of their hiding corner, and headed back to peek out of the small door window. This time, they saw Mr. Pinky completely withdrew from the area, but likewise, they had Mandrew now lurking near the area.

"I think we can get out right now; there's no other way," Diddy proposed, stepping down from the window and looking at the door.

"Won't Mr. Pinky come back again?" Dixie questioned.

"That's why we have to go out now," Diddy replied, showing a firm attitude. "We'll get out carefully that Mandrew does not see us. And if he sees us, we just confront him and lock him in the cabinets here, I know we can."

Dixie nodded, and then Diddy started turning the doorknob to get out of there. When they opened it, they looked everywhere while they had Mandrew lurking nearby. They began to stealthily leave the room, but didn't notice that the door was still open and generated rattles as it opened again; Diddy and Dixie just begged that they hadn't been caught, but unfortunately...

"*MONKEYS!*" Mandrew shouted, spotting them instantly and running towards them.

"*Now, Dixie!*" whispered Diddy, both ready to face him.

"*JEMKY, HERE ARE THE MON-*"

Immediately, Diddy and Dixie lunged and grabbed him by the limbs on the floor. Dixie also wrapped his hair in his snout so that he couldn't scream and, almost instantly, they both lifted and took him to the room from which they had left. Mandrew was somewhat heavier, so they went with a little more difficulty.

"Quick, to the cabinet over there!" Diddy exclaimed as they were carrying him off.

Reaching a cabinet under the counters, they immediately released Mandrew and pushed him into it.

"*Darn monkeys!*" the mandrill boy exclaimed, slapping them the moment they released him.

Diddy and Dixie began to fight back, even though Mandrew hit them back a little harder. Even so, Dixie stopped him from one of his arms with her hair and managed to push him back onto the cabinet. Mandrew, instantly, tried again to lunge at the two.

"*Stupid pair-*"

"*Stay there!*" Dixie exclaimed, slapping him and then pulling on the locks of his head. "You pulled my hair this way too... *Mandy!*" she called him, releasing him sharply.

Mandrew stood still instantly, and then began to laugh mockingly.

"*Mandy,*" Mandrew imitated her as he continued to laugh. "Huh! Did you just realize?! How stupid you were! And more stupid for having believed-"

Immediately, Diddy and Dixie pushed him harder into the cabinet and then closed the doors. Like the previous occasion, Diddy stayed pushing the doors so that Mandrew didn't come out, while Dixie went to take a few devices that were in that room and placed them attached to the doors of the cabinet, also taking care not to hurt herself with them.

"*HEY, LET ME OUT!*" Mandrew yelled at them, kicking hard at the cabinet doors. "*DARN IT, WHAT DO YOU THINK, PAIR OF DWARF LIZARDS?!*"

Mandrew seemed to have a little more strength, and was managing to push the doors with the metal devices, so Diddy and Dixie had to go back to place more of those to reinforce the blocking.

"WE'LL CATCH YOU, YOU IDIOTS!" Mandrew exclaimed from inside.

Then, both immediately went to the exit of that room... But suddenly, when they reached the doors, Mr. Pinky appeared to them again, who didn't hesitate for a second to point the gun at them.

Dixie, risking her safety, took Mr. Pinky's arm by surprise to deflect it, at the same time that she deflected the gun with the help of her hair. She immediately grabbed Diddy's arm and then started running away.

Mr. Pinky continued to chase them relentlessly, shooting a few times along the way as well. Meanwhile, Diddy and Dixie kept running and wondering when they would be able to carry out their escape plan without interruption.

Both climbed back up to the second floor so that Mr. Pinky lost sight of them, but unfortunately, he managed to locate them soon after and even fired a few shots upwards. Diddy and Dixie headed in random directions, although no matter how hard they tried to get sidetracked, Mr. Pinky found them.

Later, both decided to head to the basement to hide as they had done before. When they got there, they tried to open the door immediately, but to bad luck, they forgot that they had left it secured to keep the kong children safe. And, to make matters worse, Mr. Pinky reached them to that area, where they had no alternative escape.

"Oh, no, no, no!" Dixie exclaimed, clinging to Diddy, as they both trembled in terror when Mr. Pinky began pointing the gun at them. *"Mr. PINKY, DON'T DO IT, PLEASE!"* she begged him.

"DON'T KILL US, WE WERE YOUR STUDENTS!" Diddy added in the same way. *"DON'T SHOOT!"*

Diddy and Dixie, keeping their eyes closed tightly and clinging to each other, felt their last hopes fade, and even, they both thought of their respective DK Island loved ones at that very moment.

A few seconds later, Diddy opened one eye and looked sideways at Mr. Pinky... Then, he tapped Dixie's back to observe him as well: Mr. Pinky had stood still and had even lowered the gun; now he was just staring at them.

"Uhh... He is... Won't he hurt us?" Dixie whispered in confusion.

"Hmm... I see," Diddy said before slapping his own head. "Oh, right, how did we not think about it before?... He may actually be under the effects of that hypnotizing mixture, that's why he doesn't want to kill us anymore... We just told him *not to*."

"Really?" Dixie said before speaking to him. "Mr. Pinky... Leave the gun on the floor and raise your arms."

As if he now looked like a class student, Mr. Pinky followed Dixie's order just as she said. Diddy and Dixie were shocked, and at the same time wished they had thought earlier that they could do that so that the Mr. would stop chasing them.

"Wow, so, it does work," Diddy said before speaking to him as well. "Hey, Mr. Pinky... you do recognize us, don't you? We are Diddy and Dixie."

"We were your students in the last weeks of the last scholar cycle," Dixie added with a forced smile, continuing the conversation.

"D-Diddy... Dixie," Mr. Pinky uttered coldly, looking at them seriously.

"Yes, yes, the same ones!" Diddy exclaimed, waving his arm. "We also stayed at your house while we were on Hurricane Island, remember that!"

"You appreciated us very much and you would never hurt us," Dixie added in the same way. "It was those evil mandrills and orangutans! They must have given or done something to you to make you forget everything and obey them, surely it was so!"

"But don't listen to them, mister! Those apes *are evil*, very evil; *they just want to hurt you too and make you one of them; you're not like that!*"

Mr. Pinky continued to look at them both seriously, but slowly frowned as if confused.

"Please, Mr. Pinky, remember that," Dixie said in a pleading tone.

"I don't think he'll do it easily," Diddy whispered to Dixie after a while. "But anyway, he can hear us and do what we say."

"By the way..." Dixie added, looking pensive. "What if just in case... Mr. Pinky knows about any alternative way out of this building?"

Diddy opened his eyes to the fullest while thinking the same thing.

"That's right! Let's ask him," he said before turning to the teacher. "Mr. Pinky, by any chance... do you know how to get out of this building? Not the main door, of course."

Diddy and Dixie begged in their minds for Mr. Pinky to give them some affirmative answer. Several seconds of silence passed, as his hopes began to lose weight... When suddenly, the teacher began to raise his gaze slowly.

"Y-yes..." he stammered, nodding.

The two little kongs were gradually showing a smile of hope, in fact, it was one of the few smiles they were having in that whole situation.

"Really?!" Diddy exclaimed, jumping with excitement. "Tell us where, please!"

Mr. Pinky, maintaining his lost look of confusion, began to look up and then look back at them both.

"Last... floor... portable... ramp," Mr. Pinky replied coldly.

"Say what?" Dixie asked, confused at the answer. "Are you saying that... on the top floor is there an exit? How's that?"

"Ramp..." the teacher replied again, stuttering. "Large ramp... very large... appears... on top floor... outside."

"Let's see, are you telling us that on the top floor there is... *a ramp*?" Diddy asked, looking at him strangely.

"Button... activate... ramp," the teacher added.

Diddy and Dixie didn't quite understand him, but at least they knew that Mr. Pinky may have a solution.

"Mister... and what if you show us that 'escape route'?" Diddy suggested with a shrug.

Mr. Pinky took up his gun again, turned around and stopped at the corner of the small corridor where they were, watched through the next corridors, and then spoke to the two of them again.

"Follow me!" the teacher said as if he wanted to give them an order.

Diddy and Dixie agreed to accompany him and set off. The good thing is that at least they wouldn't have to worry about hiding from him anymore... Not even the quartet for the moment, except for Jemky, although they wouldn't have any problem if they found him, because they would face him without complications... In fact, he was the one they wanted to fight the most.

The three continued walking through the corridors, until reaching where Mr. Pinky indicated...

Chapter 68: Rescue Mission

Mr. Pinky, along with the pair of little kongs, arrived at the hall of the main staircase, and began to climb to the top floor of the building. Diddy and Dixie only hoped that the route mentioned by the teacher would be easy for them to escape.

"Will we mention to him about the herd of kong children?" Dixie asked Diddy quietly as they climbed up.

"Obviously, I don't think he'll object if we explain."

Arriving at the top floor, Mr. Pinky went to a room next to the one that contained the cells, it was a much smaller room of only the eighth part of the other, but with an entrance large enough for someone of any size to pass.

Diddy and Dixie followed Mr. Pinky into that room. Then, he started pointing to a button on one of the walls.

"Ramp..." the teacher said, pointing to the button.

"What are you saying?" they both asked him.

Then, Mr. Pinky went to the button and pressed it... Suddenly, the wall in front of them began to tilt outward as if it were being knocked down, while a small gust of wind entered. What happened next, left Diddy and Dixie speechless: in a descending way, a huge zig-zag ramp was unfolding that ended in the ground outside; this was something wide for anyone to get down.

"B-But, how?" Diddy said, looking down puzzled.

"It must be an emergency exit or some alternative route to move the animals," Dixie added. "But it's perfect for us to get out."

"Well, then what are we waiting for? Let's go get the kids right now!" Diddy exclaimed.

"Will we leave Mr. Pinky here right now?" Dixie asked.

"I say we take him with us; he can defend us in case something happens," Diddy added.

Diddy and Dixie, along with Mr. Pinky, went back down the stairs, and headed back to the door that led to the basement where they had hidden the herd of kong children. They didn't have any mishaps along the way, luckily.

Upon arrival, Diddy knocked on the door with some force so that it could be heard all the way to the basement.

"Open the door, please!" Diddy exclaimed, raising his voice a little.

Almost a minute later, the door began to open, and one of the kong children peeked out. But immediately, Mr. Pinky put himself on guard and pointed the gun at the boy.

"NO, NO, MR. PINKY, PUT THE GUN DOWN!" Dixie ordered him instantly, managing to stop him. "Don't shoot any kong children you see here; they were hypnotized by those bad apes too... Well, for their sons, but under the orders of those apes. We have to save and get them all out of this place."

"That's right, Mr. Pinky," Diddy added. "We're even going to get you out of here... Now, stay here while we go get the rest of the kids, okay? Wait for us here."

Mr. Pinky gave another look of confusion, but immediately put down the gun.

"And by the way, if those apes or any of their four sons come, don't listen to them," Dixie said. "And don't tell them we're here and we got the kidnapped children out."

After the instructions, Diddy and Dixie entered the room that led to the basement, where they began to go down the stairs until they were reunited with the herd.

"Listen, everyone!" Diddy said to them, going down the last few steps. "Right now, we're going out. Come, follow us!"

Diddy gave the signal to the herd, and then they started climbing the stairs until they reached the door. They left that room and were reunited with Mr. Pinky, to whom they had to calm him down again and explain that he shouldn't harm any of the kong children. Then, they waited and made sure that the entire herd was complete.

"Now!" Diddy said before speaking to everyone. "Listen to me: we all go to the top floor, and then we'll go down a ramp, okay? And there we'll go to the ship to leave here."

Diddy and Dixie went to the front of everyone and began to guide them to walk. They both felt calmer that they now had all the kongs they needed to get out of that place; they just hoped that they could get safely to the ship and finally get out of all that islet.

The entire herd of kidnapped kongs and Mr. Pinky were silent, and only followed Diddy and Dixie, who were stealthily through the corridors.

"Hey, Diddy," Dixie said as they were walking. "Do you remember that in those video recordings, Rocky mentioned that this hypnotizing mixture takes effect on them for two or three months, and then leaves them *crazy*? And then they said that... they won't regain consciousness."

Diddy paused for a while, at the same time as the herd did... He hadn't thought about that detail.

"That means..." Diddy said, shocked. "So... they'll never be the same again... *Never* again?" he added, pointing to the herd and Mr. Pinky. "No, no, no, there has to be a way to bring back their memory!"

"In fact, I'm not so sure about that," Dixie added worriedly. "I mean, surely that hypnotizing mixture, to take effect on them for two or three months, must be doing some considerable damage to their brains."

"But what if it doesn't?... Or what if those apes may have some other of their rare mixtures that could restore their memory and will?"

"We'd have to find out. Although I doubt it very much; I don't think those apes created such a thing; they only create things for evil purposes."

"Oh, but if there's no way to bring back their memory... then it's almost the same as them being like Jenny and the other three kids?"

Both of them looked for a while at all the kongs they brought, who were kept still and only obeying the orders of both. They only thought now what would become of the whole herd and Mr. Pinky if they didn't really recover their memory; practically, it would be as if their lives had already been irreversibly taken from them. They even questioned whether it was worth all the rescue they were doing. They thought about the families of those kong children, how they would react if they saw their little ones in that state and, above all, they thought about Mr. Pinky, whom they had come to esteem so much and who now it was possible that wouldn't remember them anymore, and they hadn't been able to say goodbye to him.

"Anyway..." Diddy said with a sigh. "We have to continue with this anyway; there is no turning back."

Diddy and Dixie gave the signal to the rest and resumed the walk; they couldn't do anything else for the time being after all. Suddenly, both of them stopped and instantly beckoned the rest ones to stop too.

"Stop, please! *Don't continue!*" both whispered to the herd in a hurry.

In the perpendicular corridor at the end, there was a member of the quartet, whom they hadn't yet ran into face to face.

"I'm telling you everything is fine, Dad!" this member exclaimed, rolling his eyes while having a portable intercom stuck to his ear. "Of course! I swear we saw that monkey boy here too!"

Truth be told, Diddy and Dixie with the herd were quite in sight of that orangutan boy; it was all a matter of the latter turning to look at them.

"Don't worry, if he sees us, we'll confront him and lock him up somewhere, too," Diddy whispered to Dixie without looking away from the orangutan boy.

"I feel like giving that idiot what he deserves," said Dixie, looking hatefully at the orangutan as she remembered everything that happened.

"Tell me about it," Diddy replied in kind, before looking down at another corridor on the sides. "Let's go over there."

Diddy and Dixie told the rest to turn off into the corridor, trying not to make noise with their footsteps.

"*Yes!*" Jemky exclaimed, speaking to the intercom device. "I told you he even activated the security of the front door... Oh, well, don't believe me then... Anyway, you're almost here, right?"

Suddenly, Jemky was heading down the corridor where the fugitive herd had been, so Diddy and Dixie had to direct them to other corridors, since he was walking successively close to where they were walking.

"Where did you say?" Jemky continued speaking, while keeping suspicious glances in the corridors. "You already have this island in sight, right?... Ah, then you're already close. Well, soon you'll see that the monkey does walk around here... Well, you'll see."

Diddy and Dixie opened their eyes to the fullest while feeling an adrenaline rush when they heard that, so they no longer cared if they made noise and began to accelerate their steps along with the herd; they knew they had to hurry to get them all out of there.

"Mandrew?!... It's you?" Jemky was heard saying as he approached. "*Mandrew!*"

The herd was heading at an accelerated pace to a random route, until Jemky lost them.

"Wait, we can't go up the stairs yet!" Diddy whispered, stopping them all. "Over there is Rocky locked up; Jemky could release him."

Diddy and Dixie waited for Jemky to no longer be heard nearby, and then continued to walk normally.

"Oh, now what do we do?" Diddy exclaimed, beginning to panic. "Those apes are already arriving; we're not going to be able to get the ship out easily. We can't leave yet or they'll find us out along the way."

"I got it! We'll leave them all hidden in the ship cabins," Dixie suggested, trying to stay calm. "Then, we just wait for those apes to come in here and then we'll set sail the ship."

"But a ship is not fast; they can locate it, and what if they then launch a missile or something to stop it?"

"Well, the truth, I don't think so. Those apes want them all alive before doing that atrocious procedure, don't you remember it in that instruction? And I don't think they want to hurt Mr. Pinky either, if they also plan to do the same."

Both continued on their way to the staircase hall. During the tour, they passed through the corridor where the pipeline that they were going to use at first as an escape route was located, which was still infested with millipedes. On the sides was also Melvyn who, for a moment, Diddy and Dixie were scared to see him, but then remembered that they themselves had left him there.

"I had forgotten," Diddy said with a shrug.

Suddenly, the moment they passed by Melvyn, they stared at him for a while; even standing still like a doll, he had a complete look of being a real kong boy... A little kong boy who had been real and who had now only been turned into a manipulable object at the hands of the group of evil apes. Just looking at the harmless child's face of Melvyn, who was perhaps called something else, only conveyed great pity to both when thinking about how he could end up that way. Leaving him behind, Diddy stopped looking at him and continued on his way while trying to remain calm. Dixie, on the other hand, stared at Melvyn for a while longer, and then stopped doing it too; along the way, she only thought about that quartet, about who those four kong children could have been, but now nothing could be done for them.

"Now, let's go up quickly," Diddy whispered as they reached the staircase room.

Everyone began to climb, but at the same time, they were generating a few noises with their footsteps that could be heard clearly.

"HEY, WHO'S THERE?! ARE THE MONKEYS?!" Rocky was heard screaming behind the door under the stairs.

Immediately, Mr. Pinky raised his gun and even wanted to go downstairs again.

"No, no, no, Mr. Pinky!" Dixie whispered, holding his arm instantly. *"Don't listen to that monkey who is screaming. He's one of the sons of those apes; they don't have to see us!"*

"DARN IT, MONKEYS, I KNOW IT'S YOU!" Rocky shouted, kicking in the door repeatedly.

The whole herd ignored it and continued climbing until they reached the top floor; they were finally going to get out of that place. They went to the room where the ramp that Mr. Pinky had shown them was, and they looked outside to see that everything was in order.

"Well, now!" Diddy said, looking at the whole panorama where they could see the horizon outside that island. Then, he spoke to the herd. "Listen, everyone will go down this ramp and go to that ship over there. There you'll hide in the cabins and we'll wait for those apes to enter this building to be able to leave this islet calmly."

"Hey, Diddy," Dixie called him.

"Yeah?"

"I was thinking... Maybe we could find some way to restore the memory of all of them, since we still can't leave here with the ship because those apes are arriving here."

"What? Are you sure?" Diddy asked with a look of strangeness. "It's that... It's true what you said: those apes wouldn't do such a thing to restore their memory; they wouldn't have the need to."

"But thinking about it, what if they do have some elixir somewhere?... Or even, instructions on how to do it. It's that actually... Mr. Pinky and all these children will no longer be the same anyway."

Diddy thought about it for a moment, and it was true: all those kongs they were saving had lost all their will and it would be the same whether they were rescued or not. Obviously, neither Diddy nor Dixie had the negligence to leave the teacher and the herd of kong children at the mercy of the evil apes, but at the same time, they wondered what would become of all of them after they were rescued...

"Well... we could try. Let's see what's there," Diddy said, shrugging and sighing. "We just have to leave them all hidden on the ship... Mr. Pinky could do it," he added before turning to the teacher. "Mr. Pinky, take these children to the cabin of the ship and hide yourself too, take care of them and don't let those bad mandrills and orangutans catch them."

Mr. Pinky, keeping his gaze almost expressionless, nodded and walked to the front of the children.

"Follow me!" the teacher said, beckoning to the herd.

Then, they all started to descend the ramp. Diddy and Dixie stayed for a while watching them from above to make sure they didn't deviate and, apparently, everything was going well. Later, the herd

with Mr. Pinky reached the outside ground and headed towards the ship. Mr. Pinky seemed to have understood everything clearly.

"Now, let's go," Diddy said to Dixie.

They both re-entered the building and closed the door of that small room. Then, they headed down the stairs of the building at high speed. They went to the first floor where they would go to look for the instructions they found recently in the 'kitchen' of the group of apes.

"Quick, there it is," Dixie pointed out, heading to grab the instruction book. "Then we go to the laboratory of those apes."

Dixie took the instruction book and immediately left there to go straight to the laboratory of the apes, where they had been when they arrived at that building. The door of that room was unlocked this time, so they were able to enter without problems, and then secured it in case it became necessary.

"Now!" Dixie exclaimed, placing the instruction book on one of the counters and beginning to check it. "Wow, it's too many pages."

Diddy and Dixie took quick glances at the instruction sheets in case they could find anything that could help them. They spent about three minutes as they continued to check if they could find a section of creating elixirs... but unfortunately, there seemed to be nothing, and if they didn't find some solution to restore herd's memory, they would have to take them all to Hurricane Island as they were, even if they would never be the same again.

"No, no, no, there has to be something," Dixie said, finishing flipping the book.

A moment later, they reached the last pages where there were only the instructions of the procedure that was applied in Jenny's quartet. Diddy and Dixie paused in the search and were pensive for a few seconds, helpless to do anything else.

"And then?" Diddy asked with a look of disappointment.

"But we can't take them all in that state either; what reaction will their relatives have when they see that their children aren't and won't be the same anymore?... And about Mr. Pinky; what's going to become of him now? He had a whole quiet life and now... he simply won't have it anymore; who will watch over him for the rest of his life?"

"Or maybe those apes have another such instruction book around here," Diddy said pensively, observing the entire lab around. "Why don't we review?"

Diddy went to the counters attached to the wall and climbed on them to search the high cabinets. He thought that maybe the apes would have a separate instruction manual that was exclusive about the creation of elixirs.

On the other hand, Dixie still stared at the instructions they had brought. With nothing to do for the moment, she began to check the last pages where were the instructions that the apes planned to apply on the quartet of mechanical children later.

"Oh, there's no other book anywhere," Diddy complained, closing a cabinet door. "Do those apes create those elixirs on their own or what?... Wait a minute! Is that..."

Suddenly, Diddy immediately got out of the counters when he saw something in a container that caught his attention. That shiny object was still shining just as it was when they had it on DK Island.

"But it's... the emerald," Diddy said, taking it immediately and smiling for a few seconds. "Look, Dixie!"

Dixie opened her eyes to the fullest and immediately went to take it. Indeed, it was the same: bright and deep green.

"So, it's the same!" Dixie exclaimed, also smiling for a while. "I thought I would never see it again... And it's also the *same* one those apes wanted so much," she added, becoming serious again. "Just now I was reading *that*."

"What?" Diddy asked with a look of strangeness. "So... do they really plan to 'revive' Jenny's quartet with this one?"

"Yes... And I think they really... 'revive *them*'," Dixie added, heading back to take the instructions and show it to Diddy. "Look!"

The last page of the instruction book showed a few short steps, indicating a final procedure that the group of apes was probably planning to apply on Jenny's quartet. These instructions, entitled "*Steps for the 'immortality' of the mechanized kongs*," indicated a strange method that claimed to be able to bring mechanized kong children back to life, or rather... revive them in another way.

"It reads: '*The mechanical kong will move, talk on its own, and you will be able to interact with it as if it were alive*'?" Diddy read the page. "But now why would those apes want to do that? I mean... it sounds contradictory that they first finish them off in such an atrocious way and then want to 'revive' them."

"Or rather, I think they want to make them his minions or something," Dixie surmised. "Here it also says '*The kong will be almost like a baby again, it can be educated and trained at convenience and will do everything that is ordered*' That means... they would be almost like the herd of kidnapped kong kids."

"But then why did they do that horrible mechanization?" Diddy questioned. "I don't get it."

"Oh, of course, maybe it's because mechanical children are like objects and wouldn't need care or food or anything, and according to the instructions about that mechanization: it said that the quartz they used are to give them *artificial vitality*, so, that is what keeps them 'alive' and makes them function in 'realistic' ways."

"I think it makes sense," Diddy said with a shrug. "And I'm not surprised by those apes; they wouldn't want to take care of more children; just by seeing how detestable they treat their own sons."

"Hey, Diddy..." Dixie interrupted, looking at the instruction book and then at Diddy, speaking a little firmly. "What if we revive Jenny and the other three kids?"

Diddy gave her a look of surprise at what she said and just thought she was joking.

"Say what?" Diddy exclaimed, holding his expression. "What did you say? Are you serious?"

"Yes!" Dixie reaffirmed, showing him the instructions. "Just look: here it says that they'll be as if they were alive again, they'll act on their own and they can be trained and taught things... Have you not thought that we could 'revive' them, take them out of here too with the others and then give them to their families?"

"Hey, wait, wait," Diddy exclaimed, trying to calm her down. "I don't mean to be negative; we could do that, but... Jenny, Mandy, Ricky and Melvyn are... *you know*, they don't exist anymore; there is no turning back with them, not even applying *that* method of reviving them will they be the same again."

"I know, but... this can be an opportunity to *save them*, even if they're as they're. Who knows what those evil apes will do with them later. And also... the four *of them are missing* children; Mr. Pinky had mentioned that Mandy was; in the animal shelter there is Ricky's father and he surely wants to know where his son is; about Jenny and Melvyn we don't know anything, but surely someone close to them must be searching for them too."

Diddy thought about it for a while. The idea didn't sound bad at all, the problem was that he wasn't sure if it would be worth it and if they were really 'rescuing' Jenny's quartet, even if there's no bringing them back. Diddy watched the emerald for a few seconds; he also knew that they couldn't do anything else at that time, and that maybe... it wouldn't hurt to try while waiting for the apes to enter the building so they could escape on the ship calmly.

"Hmm, I think we could," Diddy said, smiling a little, earning a smile from Dixie. They would both get excited at that moment, but they couldn't do so much in the midst of that situation. "Well, so... are we going to see Jenny and the other three kids?"

"Yes! And we must go fast, before those apes arrive," Dixie said, looking toward the door. "Let's go!"

Diddy and Dixie walked to the door immediately, then got out of the laboratory. They were ready to head towards the quartet's room.

"*Aha!* But just look at who's here!"

Diddy and Dixie stopped instantly to hear someone as soon as they left the lab. They turned to see a corner of the corridor and saw none other than Jemky, who was heading towards them. Even so, Diddy and Dixie just stayed to wait for him while they looked at him with all the hatred and feeling of humiliation coming back to them.

"So, you're walking around the building, right?!" Jemky said sarcastically before he started yelling. "*MANDREW! THE MONKEYS! HERE THEY-*"

Without thinking so much, Diddy and Dixie lunged at Jemky. In fact, of the four bully kids, he was the one they confronted most roughly.

"*NO, LET ME-*" Jemky exclaimed before Diddy and Dixie managed to knock him to the floor.

"You *owe me one*, you bunch of burning hairs!" Diddy replied, furious and imprisoning him face down by the limbs against the floor. "*You owe us, rather!*"

"*You're a stupid phony who has nothing to do!*" Dixie added in the same way, before crossing his arms back and crushing them.

"AHHH! One moment, one moment!" Jemky shouted at them, trying to look them up. "First of all, how did you manage to get in here, Diddy?!"

"It's none of your business, you dumb!" Diddy replied, slapping him.

Then, Diddy and Dixie took each of his limbs and began moving him to the lab.

"Hey, wait, wait, LET GO OF ME, WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?!" Jemky yelled at them, trying to get his limbs free. *"DARN STUPIDS, FACE-"*

Immediately, Dixie also wrapped his snout with her hair to make him shut up. Then, both took him to a mobile cabinet with doors that were inside the laboratory, and they released him there.

"STUPID MONKE-" Jemky exclaimed, trying to lunge at both of them, but they pushed him hard into the cabinet.

Dixie then grabbed and pressed him by the neck against the inside of the cabinet in a threatening manner.

"Now, tell me," Dixie said, giving him a murderous look. "Do you have so much time left to forge letters and photos of me?!"

Instantly, Jemky started laughing out loud as if Dixie had told him a joke, which only made Dixie angrier.

"Well, yes," Jemky replied as if nothing and shrugged.

"Darn impostor!" Dixie exclaimed, pressing him more sharply, taking revenge for all the humiliation she felt from that situation.

Jemky put himself in a fighting position and gave Dixie a push to move her away, but instantly, Diddy gave him a hard push and put him back inside the cabinet. Then, Diddy began to continuously slap Jemky's face.

"You also beat me this way, you burnt-annatto-hairs!" Diddy exclaimed as he attacked him.

"You're an envious scoundrel!" Dixie added, pulling the lock on his head, then releasing him sharply. "And you also pulled me by the hair this way... *Jenny!*"

Jemky looked at them for a couple of seconds and started laughing again as if they were telling him a joke, before speaking to Dixie.

"Are you jealous because your ex-boyfriend kissed Jenny?!" he said, finishing laughing, before Dixie gave him another tuft pull abruptly and even made him hit himself against the cabinet.

"You were who did that, you idiot!" Dixie replied.

Dixie gave Jemky another hard push, closed the cabinet doors and held them down so he couldn't come out.

"Quick, let's do the same as with Melenky!" Diddy told Dixie.

Diddy climbed to the top of the cabinet and, as they did with Melenky, leaned his back against the wall to push the cabinet with his feet, causing it to fall with the doors against the floor.

"DARN LIZARD-HEADED MONKEYS!" Jemky shouted from inside the cabinet and started banging to try to get out. *"AND WHAT THE HECK DID YOU DO WITH MELENKY?!"*

"Let's drag the cabinet out of here!" Diddy whispered to Dixie.

Diddy and Dixie started pushing the cabinet out of the lab, while Jemky was trying to get out and savagely banging on the walls of the cabinet and insulting them both.

"Can you go see anything else to put on it?" Diddy told Dixie.

Dixie quickly returned to the laboratory and took the first device in sight and then returned to the cabinet where Jemky had been locked. Then, she put the device on the cabinet, and with that they were able to "reinforce security" so that Jemky couldn't get out.

"DARNED!" Jemky shouted at them, trying to push the cabinet in vain. *"I HATE YOU! STUPID WORM-FACED MONKEYS!"*

"Learn first not to be envious!" Dixie replied.

"Now, let's go see those other four kids," Diddy whispered to Dixie.

Diddy and Dixie ignored all of Jemky's insults and made their way to the quartet's room. This time, they finally felt that they could walk freely through the corridors of the building, because now they no longer had any individuals to hide from for the moment.

When they arrived at the quartet's room, they immediately went toward the other quartet, although this time, Melvyn was missing, since he had been left in the corridors.

"Are we going to take them one by one?" Diddy asked.

"How about we operate them with those electrode suits?" Dixie suggested.

Both went to where the electrode suits were, which were used to manage the Jenny's quartet... But they noticed that these seemed to be very complicated to wear, because they contained a lot of electrodes with wires in addition to elastic bands that had to be put on different parts of the body; all that would take them quite a few minutes, in addition the fact that they wouldn't know how to operate those suits.

"Uhh... What if we just carry them all in our arms?" Diddy suggested as he examined the electrodes on one of the suits.

They went back to the quartet and began to put them lying on the floor. Then, each one lifted the mechanical kong children individually. First, they took Jenny and Ricky, because they were the ones who seemed to weigh almost the same as them.

"Well, let's go fast!" Diddy exclaimed.

The two, each with a kong child in their arms, headed as fast as they could toward the laboratory. They moved with a little more difficulty because they were now carrying them in their arms.

Fortunately, this time they no longer had any obstacles or any enemies that could find them out, so they arrived without problems to the laboratory.

Upon entering, they left Jenny and Ricky sitting in the chairs where the apes had the herd of kong children at the beginning.

"Now go get Mandy. I'll go get Melvyn," Diddy told Dixie.

They left the laboratory and now each took different directions. Diddy went to the pipeline that they originally planned to use as an escape route and where they had left Melvyn. Diddy sat Melvyn on the floor and then lifted him up to carry him. Meanwhile, Dixie had returned to the quartet's room and did the same with Mandy. When they got back to the lab, they placed both of them in the chairs too.

"Now, the instructions!" Dixie said, going to take the instruction book and open the last few pages.

Diddy also joined to read the instructions, and both quickly and carefully read everything it said.

"So..." Dixie said, reading. "We need the emerald... Three sapphires... A container... Hydrogen peroxide... a syringe... crushing machine... a cutter... a mixer..."

"Oh, and here would there be all that?" Diddy questioned.

"I guess so; the apes just needed the emerald. We'll have to look for those materials and ingredients," she said before closing the instructions and leaving it back at the countertop.

"Well, in short: we have to prepare a mixture with those ingredients and pour it into those black boxes, which have those robots, using a syringe, right?"

"Exactly, that's all," Dixie said as she began to search the shelves and cabinets.

"I think I've seen those sapphires around here," Diddy said before joining the search as well.

Both set out to find all the elements that were required for the procedure. They didn't have such difficulty, so it took them about five minutes to find everything; apparently, the group of apes already had almost everything prepared to execute that experiment on the quartet. Diddy and Dixie still didn't understand why the apes would want to do such a thing to those kong children, though they assumed it was for evil purposes anyway.

They gathered all the elements in one of the central countertops, and then dragged all the chairs where the quartet was until having them close.

"I guess it's all these materials," Diddy said, making sure everything was complete. "Well, what do we do first?"

"According to what it says here..." Dixie said, opening the instruction book again. "First we have to crush the sapphires."

"It's with this machine, right?" Diddy said, taking a metal device that had quite a few blades inside a container.

Diddy placed the three sapphires inside the device, plugged in the latter and began to make it work. The device began to crush the sapphires and send them almost powdered through a duct, so Dixie

immediately took a glass container and collected everything inside.

"Now..." Dixie said, rereading the instructions. "We have to pour hydrogen peroxide."

Dixie took a jar of hydrogen peroxide and poured it halfway into the container.

"Next we do the same with the emerald, right?" Diddy asked.

"Yes, but we just have to get a piece out of it, and that's what we have to crush and mix with this," Dixie said, holding the container with crushed sapphires up, before putting it back on the countertop.

Diddy took the emerald and carried it to another device, which was small and had a support finished on a disc with blades around it. Dixie saw safety goggles over one of the countertops and took two to hand one to Diddy and put one on herself, even though they were somewhat large. Diddy then plugged in the device and put the disc near the emerald.

"H-how is this used?" Diddy wondered, looking at the disc of blades.

"You just turn it on and cut the emerald," Dixie said, pressing the power button on the device, causing Diddy a scare when the disk began to spin at speed.

Diddy, his hands trembling a little, put the spinning disk device in a part of the emerald so that he could take out a small portion. Meanwhile, Dixie held the emerald, also taking care not to touch her fingers with the disc. When they managed to remove the piece, both took off their goggles. Dixie immediately went to introduce that cut piece into the crushing machine, from which it came out made of shiny powder. She picked it up inside the container where the mixture of sapphire powder with hydrogen peroxide was.

For the next step, Diddy took the last device they needed to use, which was a machine with an integrated container and that appeared to be a mixer. Dixie poured all the mixture into the container of the device, and they made it work. The devices were somewhat noisy, so they were grateful that there was no one outside the lab to hear them.

"Now! It's almost ready," Dixie said when they stopped the machine with the mixture already dissolved.

Dixie removed the container from the machine and placed it on the countertop. Meanwhile, Diddy took four syringes and took them to Dixie.

"It doesn't look that hard," Diddy said.

Each one took one of the syringes and began to subtract a little of the mixture with them, trying not to exceed the amount.

"Hey, Diddy..." Dixie said as she finished filling a syringe.

"Yeah?" Diddy asked, preparing another syringe to fill.

"Well..." suddenly, Dixie was somewhat thoughtful, but at the same time, as if she wanted to say something important. "I forgot to tell you before, and I know it's not a good time now, but..." Dixie stared at Diddy, which made him look at her with some strangeness. "Thanks for... *having come to rescue me*," she told him before looking away and looking a little embarrassed. "Uhh, I really didn't

think you would, I mean... You were very upset with me and I thought you hated me for what I didn't do."

Diddy stopped with the syringes and stared at her for a while, not knowing what to say to her at first. He felt a little acceleration in his heartbeat, as he didn't want to touch that topic for the time being, but still, he had to answer it.

"Dixie... you don't have to thank me," Diddy replied, smiling a little. "I was never going to leave you alone in a situation like that... And yes, I was quite upset with you and didn't think at all about fixing things with you if that had been true, but... I also didn't hate you enough to let mysterious apes take you on a ship along with other kids."

Dixie was serious for a few seconds and then smiled a little at him too, but then looked away again and became pensive.

"Hey, Dixie," Diddy said earnestly, placing a hand on her shoulder. "Remember that you went for me to the zoo; it wouldn't be fair if something happened to you later and only I returned to DK Island and you didn't," he added smiling again and she smiled back.

"And by the way..." Dixie said after a few seconds, again looking somewhat embarrassed. "Sorry also if I treated you badly when you arrived here, sorry for not having believed you that Jenny and the others were mechanicals... And now I see that I just let myself believe things too."

"No, don't worry about any of that anymore, Dixie... I know that we both didn't act in the best way in this whole situation, neither did I, and even before... But we can't change anything anymore... Now, it only remains to remedy it as best we can."

The two looked at each other seriously, but later smiled with some shyness. Suddenly, Dixie was wanting so much to hug Diddy and even give him more signs of affection as if everything was fine again, but she also knew that things had already passed... and that they were in a dangerous situation at the time being.

"Uhh, well... Let's do this quickly to Jenny and company," Dixie said with a brief smile, returning to the matter.

Dixie took two syringes, and Diddy the other two more. Then, they went to the chairs where Jenny's quartet was.

"Well, let's try one first," Dixie said, preparing one of the syringes. "Let's try it with Mandy."

Diddy pressed the button on Mandy's left ear, which opened her head and showed the internal mechanism where the black box was in the middle. Then, Dixie reviewed for the last time the instructions in the part that indicated where to introduce the mixture, then went back to Mandy to do that last step.

"Here we go," Dixie said.

With her hand shaking a little, Dixie began to manipulate the black box that Mandy had, from where she took out one of the wires she had connected. Then, she inserted the needle into that space and began to press the plunger of the syringe, letting the mixture pour completely. After that, she reconnected the wire and closed her head.

They both stared at Mandy for almost a minute, but still nothing was happening; she just kept maintaining an expressionless look and mannequin posture.

"Let's try it with the others meanwhile," Diddy suggested with a shrug.

Diddy and Dixie immediately proceeded to do the same step to the other three kids, trying to get the mix into the correct wire space. Then, in the same way, they closed all kids' heads and waited a few more seconds for something to happen... But they didn't see any effect emerging.

"Are you sure we put them in the right wire?" Diddy asked insecurely.

"Of course, in the instructions it said," Dixie reaffirmed, taking a look at the instructions.

Diddy read that last page again too and, in fact, they saw that they had followed the instructions correctly... Suddenly, Diddy noticed a detail they apparently hadn't seen before.

"Wait a minute..." Diddy said, getting a better look at some letters at the end of the instructions that seemed to be written in opaque ink. "Oh, no, no, no!" Diddy exclaimed in despair reading what it said. "The mixture was for *each one*, it was not a single mixture distributed for the four of them."

"W-what?!" Dixie exclaimed, reading that too. "Oh, no! But it can't even be seen!" she replied, rubbing that last writing that was faint. "What do we do now?"

"Hey, but I don't think that affects them, there would only be a small difference in dosing--"

Suddenly, they both heard some movements in that same laboratory... They turned to look and got a little fright when they realized that Mandy was now standing and staring at them... This time, giving them a look that hadn't been seen since they were on Hurricane Island... She was seen again as if she had a life of her own.

"Is s-she... *alive*?" Diddy asked, looking a little nervous.

"I g-guess so," Dixie replied likewise. "Now... L-Let's just talk to her to see if it turned out as the instructions said. Be careful not to scare her."

Diddy and Dixie carefully walked towards Mandy, who was following them with her eyes as they approached, and also began to show movement and even breathe as anyone would. They both stood in front of her and began to signal to her as she continued to stare at them. At the moment, she was only seen with an expression that someone who had just returned to life without remembering anything would have.

"Uh, h-hi... Mandy?" Dixie said with a forced smile. "C-can you hear me?... Just in case you do know who we are?"

"Can you talk, Mandy?" Diddy asked her in the same way. "Your name is Mandy, right?"

Mandy kept still, but at the same time, she was showing a look of strangeness towards Diddy and Dixie, as if she didn't understand them at all.

"I think we have to wait a while longer," Dixie whispered to Diddy.

"Or else, I think we'll carry them in our arms to the ship," Diddy suggested with a shrug. "Or not, wait, we'd have to climb all those stairs with them and--"

Suddenly, both got another scare when they now saw Ricky getting up from the chair in a sudden way. This one, instead, went towards the two and began to observe them in a curious way.

"Uh, R-Ricky? Can you talk?" Diddy asked, signaling to him.

Dixie took the instruction book again and read what the last descriptions said.

"They should be able to talk; here it says," Dixie pointed out reading. *"The kong will move, walk and talk as if it were alive again. It should be said that its behavior will be similar to how it has been treated as a manageable robot, it'll even act as if it remembers everything it was made to do."*

"Well, they don't seem to behave the way they were when we met them on Hurricane Island," Diddy said with a shrug.

"At least it's working, I suppose," Dixie added, heading back to the quartet.

Suddenly, Jenny also appeared standing and looking at them both as if they were strangers.

"Look, Jenny has already reacted too!" Dixie exclaimed. "Only Melvyn is left to react; he may not take long."

"Can we take them walking, right? The instructions said that they could be given orders as well."

"That's right, we'll just guide them and that's it," Dixie said as she headed toward Melvyn, who had not yet made any moves. "Melvyn... Melvyn! React, please," she said, waving his shoulder.

"It must be that it doesn't take effect yet; I put the last mixture on him," Diddy added, also heading to him to try to make him react. "Melvyn! Can you hear us?... Oh, although it's time for him to react."

Suddenly, Diddy and Dixie felt someone hugging them. When they turned around, they realized that it was Mandy, Jenny and Ricky who were hugging them and smiling at them as if they were excited to see them.

"But what?!" Diddy exclaimed, looking at them strangely.

"Okay, okay, calm down," Dixie told them with a forced smile, calming them down. "Wow, it must be that they're already behaving as they were trained, according to what the instruction said... Maybe they must be recognizing us!"

"And now they look like normal ape kids," Diddy said as they finished calming them down, before speaking to them. "Yeah, yeah, we're your friends, of course," he told the three kids.

Then, both continued trying to make Melvyn react, as he still didn't respond in any way.

"What if we pour more of that mixture into it?" Diddy suggested.

Suddenly, Diddy felt again that someone was hugging him and, when he turned to look, he realized that it was Jenny, who was giving him a playful look like when they were on Hurricane Island, so Diddy was trying to pull away, but she kept holding him by the torso.

"No, no, no, calm down, Jenny," Diddy said with a forced smile and pulling her arms away.

"Hey, Melvyn doesn't get up or move," Dixie said, beginning to worry. "I think we'll have to carry him in our arms."

"I don't think it's a problem; he's easier to carry," Diddy replied as he continued to move away from Jenny.

Suddenly, Jenny lunged at Diddy and began to kiss him on the face continuously and forcibly.

"Hey, no, no, Jenny, leave me!" Diddy exclaimed, trying to remove her, but then she started to hit him. *"Hey!"*

"Jenny, no!" Dixie exclaimed, heading to push her away and defend Diddy. *"Calm down!"*

Dixie grabbed Jenny, but then she pushed her away tightly and lunged back at Diddy to hug him and try to forcibly kiss him.

"No, Jenny, please!" Diddy exclaimed before Jenny knocked him to the floor. *"Dixie, get her off!"*

Dixie immediately went to Diddy's aid and grabbed Jenny by the torso to push her away.

"No, Jenny, calm down!" Dixie replied, trying to calm her down. "That's not right! Don't learn those behaviors taught to you by that idiot and envious orangutan!"

But Jenny just shot a fierce glance at Dixie and started hitting her and pulling her hair.

"Hey!" Dixie exclaimed, trying to take her hands out of her hair. *"Release me, Jenny!"*

Dixie pushed Jenny's arms away and gave her a little push, to which she wanted to continue pulling her hair, but Dixie would not allow her. After a few seconds, Dixie felt that a second one also began to pull her hair and, looking at who it was, she saw that it was Mandy, who had also joined to give her some hair pull.

"Mandy, no! Let go of me too!"

"Girls, no, leave her!" Diddy exclaimed, heading to Dixie's defense. *"Stay still!"*

Diddy tried to push Jenny and Mandy away, but at the same time, they also became aggressive towards him and Dixie. Later, Diddy had to apply more force to push them both and with that he managed to push them away. But suddenly, Diddy felt someone else start hitting him and realized it was Ricky, who had also adopted aggressive behavior.

"No, Ricky, don't start too!" Diddy replied by pushing his hands away.

"Ricky, calm down!" Dixie ordered, joining in defending Diddy.

But suddenly, Jenny and Mandy grabbed and pulled Dixie's hair again without stopping. Meanwhile, Diddy was being attacked by Ricky and, suddenly, Melvyn also appeared trying to attack him.

"Hey, no! STOP!" Diddy exclaimed, trying to calm the two boys. *"Stay still!"*

The quartet was attacking Diddy and Dixie, and even reminded them of that same first fight they had the night they had met to play challenges.

"STOP, ALL OF YOU!" Dixie exclaimed, losing her patience and taking Jenny and Mandy by a few small locks. "ENOUGH IS ENOUGH, PLEASE!"

Dixie managed to calm the two girls and then went for the two boys, to whom she gave a small ear pulling and with that she managed to calm them down too.

"Calm down, please!" Dixie ordered the four of them, catching their attention. "Well, I guess you do understand us. Look, *you* are... Uh, well... You are kids to whom some evil apes did an atrocity and they are going to do the same with another herd of kids. So, right now we're going to get you out of here and we're going to take you to Hurricane Island, and for that we want you to follow us. And by the way, in case you remember: we were your *friends*, and friends are not treated like that aggressively, do not learn those bad behaviors that those other four stupid and evil kids taught you!"

"Do you think they're getting it?" Diddy asked Dixie with a look of strangeness.

"From what it said in the instruction, I guess so," Dixie whispered, hoping she wasn't wrong. "Okay, now, let's get them to the ship quickly."

Diddy and Dixie took the hands of the quartet, and began to direct them towards the outside of the building; they just hoped that everything would go as they expected. But first... Dixie remembered a small detail, so she quickly returned to the central counter of the laboratory and took the fractionated emerald, then hid it under her beret and adjusted it well; she didn't want to leave such a precious object abandoned.

"Now, let's go!" Dixie exclaimed, returning to Diddy and the four mechanical children.

"Okay, you just follow us!" Diddy said to the quartet. "*And please*, don't let go of us or do some mischief."

The whole quartet nodded and smiled at them as if they were understanding perfectly, which also made Diddy and Dixie smile for a couple of seconds. Then, they took up the matter again and all left the laboratory, this time through the other door, since this one was closer to the main staircase.

"Wait!" Dixie whispered when they suddenly noticed the mobile cabinet lying on the floor where Jemky had been locked. Dixie spoke to the quartet to give them the order. "Please don't make any noise and let's pass quietly."

Diddy and Dixie led the quartet quite cautiously along that way, taking care not to make any noise in case Jemky heard them... But suddenly, Melvyn let go and went to the cabinet to start examining.

"No! *Melvyn!*" Diddy whispered in despair as he tried to reach him. "Melvyn, come back here!"

Diddy grabbed Melvyn's arm, but Melvyn got mad at that and slapped him.

"*Hey, no!*" Diddy exclaimed, holding his other arm.

Suddenly, Ricky also joined in attacking Diddy again, starting to hit him.

"*Hey, no! Melvyn! Ricky!*" Dixie exclaimed, going to Diddy's defense and pushing the two boys away, but then Jenny and Mandy also started pulling his hair. "*No, Jenny and Mandy! Stop!*" Dixie

pulled their locks and ears again, and calmed them down. "Jenny, Mandy, Melvyn and Ricky! Calm down, I already explained... Oh, maybe they're not even called that."

"Hey, Dixie... wait a minute," Diddy said, looking strangely toward the cabinet lying down.

Diddy went toward the cabinet... It began to become very strange that he didn't hear any scream or noise within it. He began to give the cabinet a few light taps and, for some reason, didn't hear any response. He was sure that they had heard thousands of insults from Jemky by then, so he decided to lift the cabinet a little, and then the quartet of mechanical children helped him... When he saw its doors open by gravity, he realized that the cabinet was *empty*.

"*Oh, no, no, no!*" Diddy exclaimed desperately, dropping the cabinet heavily. "Let's leave quickly, *quickly!*"

Diddy took the quartet's hands again, and Dixie did the same. Both began to speed up their steps, at the same time as the quartet followed them, as they were beginning to assume that perhaps Jemky could have escaped, or worse, that one of the other kids had helped him escape.

"Quick, to the stairs!" Diddy exclaimed when they had already spotted the hall of the main staircase.

Suddenly, Ricky stopped abruptly, causing Diddy to stop as well, and then started running in a different direction while laughing as if he was playing with Diddy and Dixie.

"*Oh, no! Ricky!*" Diddy exclaimed, in despair. "No, Ricky, come back here!"

Diddy swerved as well, trying to catch up with Ricky, but unfortunately, Melvyn let go too and started doing the same as Ricky.

"*No, Melvyn!*" Dixie called him while holding Jenny and Mandy's hands, when suddenly, one of them let go too and started running as if she wanted to play. "*Mandy, no!*"

Not even a couple of seconds passed, when Jenny let go of Dixie too and started running.

"Oh, no, no, no! It can't be!" Diddy exclaimed, panicking when he saw that the four kids had run in different directions.

"G-go for two of them, I'll go for two more!" Dixie said before starting to run after one of the quartet.

Diddy and Dixie began to chase the quartet, but to bad luck, they were starting to run to other corridors, making it difficult for them to locate.

"*No, no, no, don't go there!*" Dixie exclaimed, her patience exhausted. "*COME BACK!*"

Jenny and company's quartet were running and laughing as they ran away from Diddy and Dixie; they were taking it as if it were a tag game. Meanwhile, Diddy and Dixie were beginning to get far from the staircase hall as they were chasing the quartet, who were already taking different routes, and that made it much more difficult for them to catch.

Later, Diddy and Dixie, with four kong children to catch, had lost sight of their targets. Both began to regret a little of having "revived" them, since they didn't take into account the difficulty of supervising them.

"Dixie, over there!" Diddy pointed to Mandy from another hallway.

Dixie caught sight of Mandy entering one of the corridors, so she resumed the chase and tried to head towards her... Suddenly, she felt that someone stopped her by grabbing her by the hair; she assumed it would be one of the four mechanical children... when suddenly... she also felt how her blood circulated abruptly to her feet when she noticed two other different children, who in addition to holding her, were pointing firearms at her head.

"Aha! So, you are trying to escape, aren't you, girl?" Mandrew said mockingly.

"How are you, precious Dixie?" Jemky added before winking at her and pointing the gun at her at the same time. "Did you think you were going to get out of here?"

Dixie, not understanding the turn that the situation had taken, and now seeing them with those lethal objects in hand, just stayed with a blank mind while her heartbeat was accelerating and her blood circulated at a higher speed.

"Hey, Dixie, where are you?" Diddy's voice was heard approaching. "That's where I saw-"

Suddenly, Diddy appeared on the scene too and was instantly frozen to see Jemky and Mandrew in that posture towards Dixie. Out of survival instinct and protection, Diddy attempted to grab Dixie and lunge at the two.

"No, let her-"

But for bad luck... Rocky and Melenky appeared on scene too and, likewise, with *firearms in hand*. Diddy immediately stood still and began to raise his hands, now not knowing what to do and with his pulse well accelerated.

"Well, well! And finally, we have the monkey too," Rocky told them in a mocking tone as he pressed the gun against Diddy's head. "You both believed you could leave us locked up just like that easily."

"Oh, are you afraid of us now, little dumb monkeys?" Melenky added, smiling in the same way.

Diddy and Dixie were just breathing heavily as they thought about what to do next. Without problems, both could fight the four of them at that moment, but the only thing that prevented them from that... it was that they were now armed; it had been a long time since neither of them had seen them like that.

"By the way, monkey... and how did you get here, huh?" Jemky asked him in a somewhat mocking tone. "I thought you had drowned in that ravine."

Suddenly, Diddy gave the four of them a murderous look, and lunged at one of them as if he had no consequences.

"Hey, hey, what do you think you're going to do, you dumb monkey?!" Mandrew exclaimed, stopping and slapping him instantly.

Then, Jemky pulled back the slide of the gun and fired a shot toward the ceiling, causing a huge scare to Diddy and Dixie, in addition to stunning their hearing for a few seconds.

"We have them loaded, in case you didn't know," Jemky told them in a threatening tone as he pointed at them again. "Now you'll stay still *and do as we tell you, pair of dwarves!*"

"Now walk!" Rocky ordered, giving them small pushes with the gun along with the other three kids in the group.

The quartet began to lead them walking to the two, with gun in hand and without lowering it at any time, which left Diddy and Dixie no other alternative in that situation, as both were still tense and without assimilating that their escape plan was getting very complicated.

"But first of all, *answer my question*, you dwarf," Jemky told Diddy, pointing at him as they continued walking. "How the heck did you get in here?!"

"It's n-none of your business," Diddy replied, under his breath and fighting his nerves.

"Answer me!" Jemky replied, pressing the gun harder against his head.

"Urgh! Well, I came suspended from the sides of the ship!" Diddy replied, grumbling. "Okay?! Are you happy now?!"

"Hmm, and you got in here through that duct, didn't you?" Jemky asked.

"Yes," Diddy replied, rolling his eyes and holding the urge to beat up the four of them if not for the guns.

Diddy and Dixie, although very indignant, began to tremble as they no longer knew what to do at that moment. The only thing they wanted was that at least the situation wouldn't get worse and, of course, what they prayed most was that the herd of kong children, Mr. Pinky and Jenny's quartet wouldn't give signs at that time, because they feared enough for their safety if they were to be found. In fact, Jenny's quartet wasn't far away, and at least they hoped they wouldn't run into them in the presence of the other quartet.

"By the way..." Rocky said, looking at them both menacingly. "When you locked me under the stairs, I thought I heard you going up and down a bunch of times. What did you do so much?!"

"I was also hearing you coming in and out of our room a couple of times!" Melenky added in the same way.

"And I think I heard you both hanging around the lab!" Jemky added. "What were you doing all this time around there?! *Confess!*"

Diddy and Dixie just looked at them indignantly as they continued to tremble, but didn't utter a word to answer them.

"TALK!" Jemky ordered them, pushing them with the gun. "*You must be plotting something!*"

"And you've hung around together, haven't you?" Mandrew commented with a judging look. "I thought you hated and didn't even want to see each other anymore."

That comment only made Diddy and Dixie angrier as they grumbled at not being able to do anything about it at the time.

"And tell it!" Rocky demanded, pushing them with the gun as well. "*What the heck were you doing?!... Or we won't have any problem pulling the triggers. SO TELL US!*"

"The only thing we did..." Dixie replied, looking hatefully at the four of them. "It was watching all your stupid video cassettes where we saw how you took us for fools from start to finish."

"Bah! We already realized that; you called us by those other names we had," Rocky replied. "But what were you doing *next?!?*"

Diddy and Dixie, still looking fearfully at the quartet's guns, just kept silent.

"*TELL US!*" Jemky replied, pressing the gun harder.

"*It's none of your business!*" Diddy replied with a posture of resistance.

"Oh, aren't you going to tell us?" Mandrew told them sarcastically. "Do you want us to release the bullets then?"

"*I know you're not even going to kill us right now anyways!*" Diddy replied, regretting having said that, but trying to look confident. "You want to take us to your criminal dads, so you can't kill us because you have to take us alive for that atrocity they want to do to us and that they did to Jenny and the other three kids!"

The four of them stood still for a few seconds, but then began to harden their gazes towards Diddy and Dixie. Jemky grabbed Diddy's shirt roughly and pressed the gun to his head, speaking to him in the most threatening tone he could.

"*Trying to be too clever, aren't you, monkey?*" Jemky said with a defiant look. "That's true, but I remind you of *one thing*: our dads haven't seen you yet and they give you up for lost, so I can calmly pull the trigger right now to send you to sleep forever and get rid of you as if nothing... And remember, too, *that you and I are not friends.*"

"And so..." Rocky said, resuming the matter. "Tell us! *What were you-*"

Suddenly, the quartet stopped at the moment when distant knocks began to be heard and seemed to come from the floor below. They sounded so repetitive that it made the quartet get on alert.

"Is it the front door?" Melenky asked. "Oh, right, it must be that it's still blocked."

"You guys stay with these monkeys; I'll go and see!" Rocky said before putting down the gun and starting to run. "They must be our dads!"

Those words quickened Diddy and Dixie's pulse and they felt again a sharp circulation to their feet; they begged with all their being that a miracle would happen so that the quartet would leave so that they could continue to escape and, of course, that the situation wouldn't become more tense.

"Oh, hey, why those little faces?" Jemky said in a mocking tone as they continued to point the gun at them. "Just behave well and nothing bad will happen to you."

"But our dads will want to mechanize them anyways," Melenky added.

"Oh! You never understand sarcasm, Melenky," Jemky replied before speaking to Diddy and Dixie. "Well! Let's see who arrived too. *Walk!*"

Jemky, Mandrew and Melenky were shoving Diddy and Dixie with their guns and kept walking, this time a little faster as they headed towards the first floor.

Diddy and Dixie were just with their minds full of overwhelming thoughts, and when they were already going downstairs and reaching the first floor, they began to feel worse and kept begging that something could be changed.

They reached the hallway that was heading to the front door, where Rocky was manipulating a device near it... A few seconds later, the security locks were unlocked, and the front door opened... Diddy and Dixie's pulse quickened much faster and they even felt as if their hearts were tired of beating when they saw five silhouettes with dark layers entering, silhouettes which... were from the group of mandrills and orangutans, who also brought a device that appeared to be an electric scalpel and a container filled with colorful quartz.

"Why didn't the door open?!" was the first thing one of the apes said to Rocky, sternly.

"Uhh, it's that... It had block-"

"And now what mischief were you doing?! AND WHAT THE HECK DO YOU DO WITH A GUN, ROC-"

"C-calm down, Dad!" interrupted Rocky to that brown-lapel mandrill. "Before you reproach us... We have a surprise that you will love," he added, smiling maliciously before heading towards the other kids of the quartet. *"Guys! Come here!"*

The other three kids of the quartet, who had guns pointed at Diddy and Dixie, started heading towards the front door along with the two of them... The faces of the quintet of evil apes were changing gradually as they looked at the pair of kongs, who when they saw them began to tremble quite noticeably and with anguished looks.

"W-what?!" the apes exclaimed. *"The monkey! Is it the monkey?!"*

"The same one!" Jemky replied, smiling with victory. "He came with you on the ship too; he tried to save his ex-girlfriend and took her out of the cells, but now we catch the two of them."

The five adult apes regained their postures and, with menacing looks, they approached Diddy and Dixie, and took them as if they were dolls. Instantly, both resisted the apes, but then three of them pulled out larger firearms and pointed at them immediately.

"Stay still," the brown-lapel mandrill threatened them, pressing the gun against their heads.

Diddy and Dixie froze as their teeth chattered from seeing the apes and being held by them. Then, the blue-lapel mandrill caught Diddy in the air and held him against the wall sharply.

"You... brat monkey!" the mandrill told Diddy menacingly and slapped him a couple of times. *"You're going to pay us for the beating you gave us a year ago! No one makes fun of us... Because of you, we lost the brat monkey girl's siblings!"* he added, pointing to Dixie. *"But now... you will be part of the herd of mechanical brats too."*

Diddy only had his pulse as fast as he could feel, even to the point of feeling as if his heart was going out. In the same way, there was Dixie being held by the red-lapel mandrill, as she began to feel constant squeezes in her chest and her eyes began to moisten with fear.

"And what were you doing trying to escape, girl?!" the mandrill told Dixie, pulling her strands of hair. "No one leaves here!"

"And wait a minute..." the black-lapeled orangutan said before speaking to the quartet. "How did the monkey manage to open the cell where the chimpanzee girl was?!"

"Uh, uh, well..." Jemky replied, beginning to tremble a little. "Oh, okay, it's that... I took Jenny to Dixie's cell to bother her, but I didn't know the monkey boy was there too, and then he turned her off and with her he could press the button that opened the cells... Yeah, yeah, I know you will scold me for that-"

"No!" the green-lapel leader orangutan interrupted in a serious posture. "For this time... I think you've done something right, guys... You've caught that monkey boy we needed," he added, this time smiling at the quartet, and earning a look of surprise from them.

"W-what?!" Melenky exclaimed, holding that expression.

"How so?" Rocky asked them in the same way, crossing his arms. "Aren't you... going to beat us or something?"

"Not for my part," the red-lapel mandrill replied.

"Neither do I. Finally, we'll settle the score with this monkey," the brown lapel mandrill added, smiling at them too. "We've needed to do that for a long time, and I see that you've managed to catch him, so you deserve a prize."

"A prize like... some guns?" Jemky suggested with a persuasive look.

"But you already have them in your hands," the blue lapel mandrill replied, to which the quartet tried to hide them as soon as they realized they had them. "No, no, no! Don't hide them... They're all yours. Of course, *handle them carefully*... And beware of an accident again!"

The entire quartet was gradually showing a smile at what the apes told them, and then they high-fived each other victoriously.

"Now let's go to the laboratory!" the mandrill said who was holding Diddy. "We have a mission to fulfill..."

The five apes, carrying Diddy, Dixie and the objects they had brought, began to walk towards the stairs. The quartet, who continued to be excited, accompanied them too while they were making faces of mockery towards Diddy and Dixie; both were only consumed to the maximum by fear while they no longer had nothing to do... And they didn't even think about fighting those big apes in those conditions...

Chapter 69: Caught Red-handed

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The herd of evil apes went up the second floor to the lab, with Diddy and Dixie in their arms. During the tour... Diddy and Dixie caught sight of some silhouettes running at the end of some corridors; of course, it was the quartet of mechanical children, who fortunately, neither the apes nor the other quartet saw them. Even so, both begged that neither would see them, since they knew that they would be finished off if the apes would find out about the recent procedure they did with those four kong children.

The herd of apes entered the laboratory and immediately placed Diddy and Dixie in the chairs where they initially had the kidnapped kong children, while keeping their guns pointed at them all the time. The apes pressed buttons on the chairs, and with those they activated shackles that tied Diddy and Dixie by the hands, legs and torso. The quartet of bully children were also in front watching them.

"Well, now we can start," the lead orangutan said, looking earnestly at Diddy and Dixie. "Escaping from here is not a good option at all, monkey children. Now... *we're glad* to have you back," he added, looking at them menacingly.

The menacing gazes of the group of mandrills and orangutans made them both too tense; it was such a strong tension that it even made them limit themselves to just thinking about DK Island and their relatives there.

"Kids!" the brown-lapel mandrill said to the quartet. "You've done something good in catching this pair, we're proud of you," he added before smiling and patting Rocky, who was his son.

"You haven't done things wrong after all," the red-lapel mandrill added, smiling and heading towards Melenky and then hugging him.

"We really needed that pair of monkeys," the blue-lapel mandrill added, patting Mandrew subtly.

"Good job, guys! You're going to be rewarded," the lead orangutan added as he carried Jemky in his arms.

Suddenly, the apes were making congratulatory gestures to their respective children, except for the black-lapel orangutan, who didn't seem to be the father of any of them, but who nevertheless showed himself with the same expression. It was a scene that, apparently, was not so common in that family.

"Alright!" the brown-lapel mandrill exclaimed as he put Rocky down, whom he had carried. "Now let's bring all those little brats to start!"

"And we have to prepare things," the lead orangutan added. "Manny and Terry, help me by ordering these quartzes by color," he said to the blue and red-lapel mandrills respectively. "Will and Rusty, get the devices ready," he added to the other orangutan and the other mandrill.

"Are you also going to teach us how to do mechanization?" Melenky asked the group of apes with a look of supplication.

"Just because we need to finish this quickly, son, we're going to teach you," the red-lapel mandrill replied, before changing to a fixed, serious look. "But just don't go out with some *antics* or *mischief*, okay?"

"Hey, by the way," Jemky said after a while. "Have you also caught a gorilla that walks through here?" he asked the adult apes curiously.

"A gorilla?" the brown-lapel mandrill said while preparing some equipment on a countertop. "Ah, yeah, that gorilla. We haven't told you, but we caught him a few days ago; he's hypnotized in case you're wondering. And we ordered him not to harm any of you, so don't fear him."

"We're going to do that mechanization to him later, by the way," the lead orangutan added.

Diddy and Dixie instantly looked at each other in panic upon hearing that and realizing that they weren't so wrong in their assumptions.

"His name is Pinky, isn't he?" Mandrew added in the same way.

"What?!" the lead orangutan exclaimed, turning to look at them with some astonishment along with the other apes. "And how do you know he's called that?!"

"Well... he was our last teacher we had in school," Rocky replied.

"What are you saying?!" the blue-lapel mandrill exclaimed. "Hmm... We did know he was a teacher, but... are you saying he was *your* teacher?"

"Yes, he was, really," Melenky replied. "Although he was only in the last two weeks before the end of the scholar cycle."

"And you never told us *anything* either," the lead orangutan said, raising his gaze seriously.

"Please, let's not start arguing again," Jemky replied, looking at his father with the same expression, before being somewhat confused. "And wait, so you knew him?"

"And why did you kidnap him too?" Mandrew asked them with a look of strangeness. "Weren't you going to mechanize only kids?"

"Uhh, well..." the lead orangutan replied, showing some hesitation to answer along with the other apes. "You see, it's a long and tedious s-story... But yes, we know him... And he has to pay us something, that's why we caught him."

"*What?!*" the quartet exclaimed, showing more confusion.

"And what did Mr. Pinky do to you?" Rocky asked them rather curiously. "And at what point did you catch him?"

"It's a long story, now is not the time to talk about it!" the brown-lapel mandrill replied. "And we managed to catch him because we knew that at this season, he frequented the place where we went to look for a school for you, at the time of enrolling you in Kong Kollege."

"But what did he do to you?" Melenky asked again. "Did he do something wrong to you? Did he ruin any of your plans or what?"

"There's nothing more to say! So, let's leave it at that," the lead orangutan replied. "Now we better start with everything; we have to bring all the little brats to mechanize!" he added, ignoring the quartet.

Diddy and Dixie were looking at each other while they had been extremely shocked by what they had just heard... Mr. Pinky having to pay *those* apes anything? They both wouldn't think it was a bad thing, as Mr. Pinky never proved to be evil; they didn't know what to think anymore... Even so, both were still worried about the herd of kong children and Mr. Pinky, as all of them were already on the ship outside the building, and they knew that it would be a huge danger to everyone if the apes found them again.

"Wait a minute!" the black-lapeled orangutan suddenly exclaimed. "*What... is this?!*"

The orangutan was looking towards one of the countertops where some devices and containers were... The same ones that Diddy and Dixie were manipulating recently to "revive" the Jenny and company's quartet.

Diddy and Dixie glanced at each other again while they were tense to see that they had forgotten to pick things up, and now the apes could discover them.

"Oh, no! You guys!" the brown-lapel mandrill shouted towards the quartet after seeing that too and taking the containers. "*Were you doing something here with our stuff?!*"

"Huh?!" Jemky exclaimed, looking confused. "What are you talking about?!"

"Well, about this!" the mandrill pointed towards the devices and the containers with remains of mixture that were in the countertop. "*What have you been doing recently?!*"

"But what are you talking about?!" Mandrew replied in the same way. "Those stuff are yours, what do you want to accuse us of now?"

"These devices are for mixing!" the mandrill replied.

"And wait a minute," the lead orangutan added, heading to take the same jar in which Diddy and Dixie had put the final mixture. "What... is this mixture?!... *What were you trying to do with this?!*"

"Which mixture?!" Jemky exclaimed. "We don't even know what that is."

"This..." the lead orangutan exclaimed, moistening his finger with the remains of the mixture and observing it in detail. "This has... sapphire powder?!... *You were spending our sapphires! We were going TO NEED THESE SAPPHIRES!*"

"Wait, wait, wait!" Rocky interrupted firmly along with the other three kids. "First of all, we have no idea what you're talking about! And second, we hardly walked through here! We've only come here to look for the monkeys!"

"Wait a minute!" Jemky exclaimed, turning to look at Diddy and Dixie, quite suspiciously. "The monkeys... Maybe the monkeys did something here! I recently saw them walk out that door!"

"Wait, that's right!" Mandrew added likewise. "They spent quite some time hanging through the building... *They might have something to do with this!*"

Diddy and Dixie, although suppressing their urge to scream, remained quiet for a few seconds, but then regained their posture so they could respond.

"W-what?! *What's wrong with you?!*" Diddy exclaimed, trying to pretend as much as he could that he knew nothing. "*What are you talking about?!*"

Jemky took the jar from his father's hands and took it to Diddy and Dixie to show them.

"You both were doing this, *weren't you?*" Jemky asked, staring at them. "*I saw you get out of here before you caught me and locked me up!*" he added, raising his voice.

"*What?!*" Dixie replied. "*What are you talking about?! We didn't walk through here either!*"

"Don't play dumb!" Jemky exclaimed. "Even when you brought me here, I saw that book on the countertop!" he added, pointing to the instruction book as well. "*Confess it! What were you doing?!*"

"*We didn't do ANYTHING!*" Diddy replied, raising his voice more.

"Ask these monkeys!" Jemky said to the group of apes. "I know it was them!"

The apes and the rest of the quartet headed towards Diddy and Dixie as they all threw hard glances at both of them.

"Yeah, it must have been them," Rocky said, crossing his arms. "And I don't know what else they did because I heard them go up and down the stairs several times."

"We didn't do anything!" Dixie replied, defending her position.

"Hmm... Actually, I don't think it was these monkeys," one of the mandrills commented, which disappointed the quartet. "Tell us rather what you were doing!"

"*Hey!*" Jemky replied with the rest, pointing to Diddy and Dixie. "*We're telling you we've seen these monkeys walking through the building!*"

"*Stop the fallacies and tell us!*" the lead orangutan replied. "*Tell us!*"

"*I TOLD YOU IT WAS THESE STUPIDS MONKEYS!*" Jemky shouted, losing patience.

"*IT WASN'T US!*" Dixie reaffirmed, maintaining seriousness. Suddenly, an excuse came to her mind. "And stop accusing us or else... I'll say what you wanted to do to us with those sapphires!"

"Huh?!" the quartet exclaimed, showing all confused at what Dixie said.

"And what are you talking about, you bonkers?!" Mandrew replied.

"Don't pretend!" Dixie exclaimed, trying to sound as natural as she could. "You wanted to hypnotize us with that mixture! You tried to create another hypnotizing mixture and used those materials!"

"Hey! What the heck are you saying?!" Jemky exclaimed furiously. *"We weren't even around here!"*

"So, you tried to create *ANOTHER HYPNOTIZING MIXTURE!*" the apes shouted at the four children, staring sternly.

"NO! Of course not!"

"That hypnotizing mixture is not made with sapphires!" the black-lapel orangutan shouted at them. *"That hypnotizing is made with a plant! The sapphires are for the mixture that we are going to apply on those four little brats that we mechanize first! They're to bring them to life! And now you have spent the darn sapphires!"*

"That is NOT true!" Rocky reaffirmed, defending their claim. *"Now I don't know what this girl is talking about! They must have manipulated these materials themselves!"*

"No, no, no, it was you!" Diddy exclaimed, going along with Dixie. "Oh, and not only that! You also tried to restore the memory to Mr. Pinky and the other kids!"

"WHAT?!" the four kids exclaimed.

"SAY WHAT?!" one of the mandrills shouted, looking very furious along with the other ones. *"WHAT ANTICS WERE YOU TRYING TO DO?!"*

"NO!" Mandrew replied. *"These monkeys are crazy; how the heck are we going to do something like that?!"*

"But it's that these sapphires *are also for RESTORING MEMORY!*" the mandrill revealed... catching Diddy and Dixie's attention instantly. *"Where did you get that information, by the way?!"*

"What?!... Wait, wait, wait!" Jemky calmed them down, shaking his head from side to side. "Those monkeys are *defaming* us! Why would we make a mixture first of all?! We were just trying to catch these mon-"

"DON'T PLAY DUMB!" the lead orangutan interrupted, in the loudest voice he had. *"Tell us the truth!"*

"WE DIDN'T DO ANYTHING, DARN IT!" Jemky shouted at them, furious and stomping.

The lead orangutan, faced with that attitude, took Jemky's ear tightly and held it like that for a few seconds.

"Hey, beware that tone and that vocabulary, little boy," the orangutan warned Jemky as he held him by the ear.

"BUT IT'S TRUE!" Mandrew added in the same way as Jemky. *"Rather stop wasting time reproaching us for things we didn't do and let's get on with what we were! Don't be stupid!"*

Those words only made the apes angrier, who after grumbling, gave each of the four kids a couple of slaps.

"But I didn't say anything!" Melenky replied, rubbing his face.

"Me neither!" Rocky added.

"*SILENCE!*" the lead orangutan shouted at them, before speaking to the other apes. "You know what? We'll take over going to get new sapphires later. Let's go to the cells to get those other little brats so we can start with that at once and for all!"

"But I say this will deserve *another punishment*," the blue-lapel mandrill said, looking sideways at the quartet. "It'll be later, but it'll be as soon as we finish mechanizing all those children."

The apes looked at the quartet angrily even before leaving the lab; they looked so furious that the congratulations they had recently given seemed to have been in vain. Even so, the quartet only rolled their eyes the moment their dads walked out the door, and then turned to Diddy and Dixie, whom they looked at furiously at the slander they had just been given.

"*You!*" the quartet shouted at Diddy and Dixie.

"*What the heck did you say?!*" Jemky reproached them, taking them both by the ears. "*Why do you defame us, you pair of dumb monkeys?!*"

"*What the heck with you two?!*" Mandrew added, pulling Dixie's hair and then Diddy's ear. "After you don't even say what you were doing, you *accuse us of something we haven't done!*"

"*You're darn scoundrel!*" Rocky added, slapping them both in the face. "*Now you better say what you were actually doing while we were LOOKING for you!*"

"*Confess it!*" Melenky shouted, giving them both one last slap.

Diddy and Dixie, even though they needed to rub their respective faces due the attacks received by the quartet, just looked at them, and for a moment, they couldn't hold back a little laughter.

"I'll just tell you something," Dixie said, looking at them mockingly. "It seems that you don't like being *slandered and accused* of something you didn't do, and even with *fake evidence*, right?" she ended by pointing with her eyes to the devices and materials they had used.

"You really went crazy!" Jemky yelled at them. "*How the heck are you going to say that we wanted to make a mixture with those sapphires?! And you even say we wanted to restore the memory of those stupid kids and Mr. Pinky! Where on earth did you get the idea that we would do SOMETHING LIKE THAT?!*"

"Ahh, yeah, I see, you don't like to be slandered," Dixie replied to him, her expression mocking. "*Just like you did with me with your darn photos, your darn letters, your darn painting and your darn smears! And you three too as darn accomplices!*"

The whole quartet looked at them both with a scowl, but then they began to laugh little by little until they let out a laugh at what Dixie had said.

"You know what made me laugh the most out of all that?!" Jemky told them, laughing and switching to that topic. "That the monkey fell and believed everything and afterwards that Dixie found him with Jenny and thought he was cheating on her!"

"*Hey, you darn burnt-hairs!*" Diddy shouted, furious and trying to wave his feet in the air. "I knew at the time that *Jenny* wasn't even a real girl... And don't make me mention that the one who tried to

make advances on me was actually you.”

“Yeah, yeah, say it without crying now that Dixie is your ex-girlfriend,” Jemky replied in a mocking tone. “And by the way... you kissed another girl!” he added, pointing at him and letting out a laugh.

“Urgh, you're darn vermin and cold-blooded!” Diddy exclaimed, shaking his feet again. “And don't change the topic! Accept that you like to slander but not that it's done to you!... By the way, you also owed one to me for your darn *wrench trap!*”

“Oh, and are you going to tell me that you didn't like receiving a kiss from a girl like Jenny?” Jemky continued sneering.

“Urgh, you're still on about that, you burnt-annatto-hairs!” Diddy shouted, losing patience and wanting to get out and confront him if he could.

“And Dixie is also another fool who fell and believed it!” Melenky added before laughing along with the group.

“Ugh, you idiotic, stop throwing that whole topic in our faces!” Dixie shouted, waving her feet. “And let's go back to the beginning: I see that you don't like to be defamed!”

“Yeah, yeah, you know what? You better talk whatever you want,” Jemky told them mockingly. “Anyway, you can't defend yourselves there as you are, and soon our dads will make you robotic puppets like your four ‘friends’, the ‘Jennies’.”

“Only the one with the biggest horns between the two of you won't be mechanized,” Mandrew told them in the same way.

“Hey!” Diddy and Dixie shouted in unison, waving their feet in the air.

“Exactly, neither of you actually had them,” Mandrew added. “So, both will be like your friends... the Jennies.”

“Anyways!” Rocky exclaimed, getting serious again. “Now, you'd better tell us: *what were you two doing here in the lab?*”

“And do you really think we're going to tell you?” Diddy replied mockingly.

Suddenly, the door slammed open and the group of mandrills and orangutans returned... They were all seen breathing hard and furious... So furious that they seemed as if they were ready to slaughter their children at that moment.

“GUYS!” The lead orangutan exclaimed. *“WHERE THE HECK ARE THOSE BRATS?!”*

“Say what?!” Jemky exclaimed, confused along with the other three kids at the sudden yells of their dads.

“The children!” one of the mandrills shouted. *“They are not in their cells! WHERE ARE THEY?!”*

“What are you saying?!” Rocky exclaimed, showing shock.

Diddy and Dixie opened their eyes to the fullest and felt an enormous tension within them at what the apes came to say. They only prayed that the herd of kong children wouldn't be found, because if so, they wouldn't want to imagine the reaction of the group of apes.

"*What did you do with them?!*" the lead orangutan asked, walking angrily towards the quartet. "*Where are they?!*"

"W-what?!" Melenky replied defensively. "We don't know anything!"

"Ohh, no, no, no!" interrupted Rocky before staring at Diddy and Dixie sternly. "This must be very clear! Maybe now it was the monkeys! *There is no doubt about that!*"

"*W-what?! HEY, NO!*" Diddy shouted from his position. "*And now what are you talking about?!*"

"*Aha! So, you did that, didn't you?!*" Jemky replied, looking furiously at them before looking at the great apes again. "*It was these monkeys! We are sure now!*"

"*NO!*" Dixie shouted. "*STOP ACCUSING US!*"

"*WHERE ARE THOSE BRAT APE CHILDREN?!*" the lead orangutan shouted too furious as if he wanted to massacre everyone present.

"*That is the monkeys' fault!*" Rocky replied. "Ahh, *sure*. That must be why I heard them several times going up and down the stairs," he added, looking at them furiously.

"*Say it now, it was you!*" Jemky insisted on both of them.

"*NOOO!*" Diddy shouted, trying to wave his feet in the air.

The group of apes also turned to Diddy and Dixie. Then, they stared at them for a while as if they were looking at their faces in detail, which made them both more tense.

"You..." the lead orangutan said to Diddy and Dixie with a menacing look. "Have you tried to free all those children?"

"N-no! Of course not!" Diddy replied.

"But you did release the blonde chimpanzee, didn't you?" one of the mandrills asked Diddy, hardening his gaze.

"Uh... W-well, yes," Diddy replied, looking at them with hatred and fear at the same time. "B-but I don't know anything about the other children."

"It was the four of them!" Dixie added, hurriedly pointing at the quartet with her eyes, trying to 'fix' the matter.

"*Hey!*" Jemky exclaimed defensively. "*We didn't do that!*"

"Of course it was you!" Dixie replied. "Especially you, Jemky! You told me you all would take those kids out if I agreed to be your girlfriend!"

"*Hey, what's wrong with you?!* *I didn't tell you that!*" Jemky shouted angrily. "*Stop talking nonsense!*"

"Oh, yeah, just play dumb!" Dixie replied, sounding as natural as she could. *"And also, that you would help us to make them recover their memory! That's why you wanted to teach us how to make that mixture!"*

"But what the heck with you!" Jemky replied. *"Stop saying fallacies! We DIDN'T DO NOTHING!"*

"But it's true!" Diddy shouted, going along with Dixie. *"You proposed everything, Jemky! You who love Dixie SO much!"*

"I don't love that fool, what's wrong with you, stupid monkey?!" Jemky shouted.

"Stop saying your stupid fallacies!" Rocky ordered them both firmly. *"I know it was you and are trying to blame us!"*

"Besides, I heard them walking around our room a couple of times!" Melenky added, pointing at them both.

"And I saw them in the kitchen downstairs!" Mandrew said in the same way. *"They even took the instruction book from there!"*

"SILENCE NOW!" the lead orangutan exclaimed, silencing them all. He stared at the quartet for a couple of seconds with a threatening expression before speaking to them. *"You four! Go up to the countertop there!"* he ordered them pointing.

"What?! For what?!" Rocky asked, looking confused.

"GET UP!" one of the mandrills shouted.

The quartet looked at the apes with some confusion, therefore, they just stood still without obeying the order of their dads. But then, the apes were even more furious and took the ears of the four to drag them to the countertop.

"Hey!" Jemky exclaimed, trying to resist them. *"And now what?!"*

The apes took the four by the torso and lifted them to the countertop they had indicated, in a way like if they were taking some dolls.

"Hey, but what's wrong with you?!" Mandrew replied, trying to get off. *"We're telling you it was those monke-"*

"SILENCE!" one of the mandrills interrupted at the same time that they held the quartet so as not to let them escape.

"Will! Pass us the whips!" the lead orangutan ordered the other orangutan.

Immediately, the black-lapel orangutan had taken some whips and handed them to the other four apes, who then took and waved them in the air while looking menacingly at their kids.

"NO, NO, NO, WAIT!" Jemky shouted, trying to cover his head with his arms. *"WAIT A MIN-"*

"STAY STILL!" the lead orangutan ordered them as he held Jemky by the locks tightly. *"And I'll beat you twice, you devil boy!"*

The apes, without further thought, began to whip their whips, each against their respective children. The quartet tried before to escape, but this time, the apes didn't allow them. Each of the four tried to cover themselves with their arms as best they could while they emitted shrieks with each lash they received from their dads.

Diddy and Dixie, from their positions, made gestures of pain while listening to how their archenemies were punished with lashes; even if it gave them satisfaction in having taken some revenge, it also caused them some discomfort to see how they were treated by those apes, since the lashes they gave them were so strong and savage that they made them feel as if they were being given to themselves.

"*HEY, STOP! STOP!*" Rocky pleaded as they continued to be whipped. "*STOP NOW!*"

After a while, the apes stopped with the lashes, but the lead orangutan continued to give Jemky additional lashes that, as he had been warned before, were double what they had given to the other three kids.

"Naughty boys, *you don't learn!*" one of the mandrills shouted at them.

The four kids just stared with some resentment towards their dads while they rubbed different parts of their own bodies. In fact, they looked very sore that for a moment they seemed like harmless children.

"And you, Jemky!" the lead orangutan exclaimed, taking him by the ear and twisting it. "*I don't want to hear again that you've done any mischief for that chimpanzee girl,*" he said in a threatening tone. "The next time you're going to get a triple beating, and don't even scream at me afterwards!"

The orangutan let go of Jemky's ear abruptly, while he maintained a look of resentment towards his father, even seeming to no longer feel like responding defensively.

"Well!" the lead orangutan exclaimed after taking the quartet down from the countertop. "Let's go find those little brats! Anyway, they mustn't be far away; they might be somewhere in the building."

"Hey, by the way, Ray," the red-lapel mandrill interrupted the lead orangutan. "What will we do after all with those two monkeys?" he asked, pointing to Diddy and Dixie.

The lead orangutan stared at Diddy and Dixie for a while. The two of them, while being watched by him, began to tremble again and be frightened to the extreme.

"Well, about the monkey boy... We can include him with the other children," the lead orangutan said, staring at him. "I'd say let's kill him right now, but I think one more kid to the herd of mechanical kids is not a bad idea. About the chimpanzee girl... In fact, we won't do anything to her for now... but we'll take her to tell us where her siblings are! No *one* is left owing us anything!"

"Okay, so, we'll take over for her as soon as we're done," the mandrill said.

Both Diddy and Dixie felt their entire circulation at speed at what the apes were saying; they kept begging for something miraculous to happen at that moment so they could continue to escape, but little by little they also felt their hopes beginning to wane.

The group of apes began to leave, but not before taking the arm of the quartet to take them as well.

"And you're going to tell us *where* those children are!" one of the mandrills ordered.

"Oh, keep believing whatever you want," Rocky replied in a tone of resentment. "But we had *nothing* to do with the disappearance of all those children!"

"You'll help us look for them then!" the brown-lapel mandrill replied, who was taking Rocky.

"Let's check the basement first!" the lead orangutan suggested.

The apes along with the quartet left the lab and left Diddy and Dixie alone. Both remained trapped in their respective chairs without being able to get out of there. As soon as all the apes got out and closed the door, both began to struggle to untie themselves from the shackles that had the chairs, they even tried to get their hands out from those which had them bound, but it didn't work. Both had to give up while they were quite desperate.

"Oh, no, no, no," Diddy exclaimed, waving his feet in despair. "These chairs are too strong!"

"I don't know what else to do," Dixie replied, looking hopeless. "Those apes will kill us soon... and it'll be worse if they find those children and Mr. Pinky!"

"No, no, Dixie... I know there's going to be a way out of here," Diddy told her, trying to stay calm, even if he couldn't. "No matter what it takes, we'll get through this situation... We will go out."

"They want to take me to DK Island to go for Chunky, Tiny and Kiddy... But they want to do that atrocity to you right now!" Dixie exclaimed, beginning to despair. "And when they find them on DK Island, they will also kill us... And even the other kongs there may be in danger!"

Suddenly, Dixie's eyes began to fill with tears and she almost wanted to let them out in masse, which made Diddy about to get the same way, but he continued to try to stay strong and keep the few drops of hope he had left.

"No, Dixie! Of course, we're both going to get out of here... And we'll return to DK Island," Diddy said, remaining serious, but at the same time, it was in vain. "Oh, who am I fooling... I don't know what to do now either."

Dixie didn't feel like saying anything more and started to let tears roll down her cheeks. Diddy, helpless, just stretched out his hand as far as the shackles of the chair allowed, and took Dixie's hand barely reaching her fingers. Both looked at each other in an anguished way while thinking thousands of things at that moment, about all... each of the two thought about their mistakes that had led them to live the whole journey they had gone through since they left DK Island to the present.

Suddenly, the door of the laboratory slammed open and the lead orangutan entered along with the blue and brown-lapel mandrills respectively, the latter with gun in hand. The three of them headed toward Diddy and Dixie, and then the orangutan took out a rope and immediately began to wrap it along Dixie's hair.

"W-w-what's going on?!" Dixie asked, barely having the strength to do so.

"You'll go to the cells again, little girl!" the orangutan said.

"*W-what?!'*"

Dixie panicked instantly, but she couldn't express it well with the apes in front of her. The orangutan then pressed buttons on the back of the chair, and its shackles were deactivated, leaving Dixie's hands and feet free. But instantly, the two mandrills pointed their guns at Dixie while now the orangutan placed other loose shackles on Dixie's hands and ankles. Instantly, the orangutan took Dixie in his arms and began to carry her away.

"No... No, no, no! Wait!" Dixie yelled at them, trying to shake her limbs in vain as she was being carried. "WAIT!"

"NO, NO, LEAVE HER!" Diddy shouted at them too, instantly becoming desperate. "DON'T TAKE HER-"

"SILENCE!" the lead orangutan ordered and quickly hit Dixie to stay still, while one of the mandrills hit Diddy and pressed the gun against his head, looking at him menacingly to silence him.

The apes took Dixie away, and now they left Diddy alone in the lab. Both looked at each other from a distance to the last, while they could not even say a word to each other due to the presence of the apes. Even when the apes withdrew completely, Diddy also began to fill his eyes with tears, this time without being able to help himself. Even so, he wanted to continue with strength to go ahead and began to struggle from the chair without stopping; he spent like this for a couple of minutes trying to at least remove his hands from the shackles. He was going into a severe panic that he couldn't think of anything but Dixie; at least he needed her to be safe.

On the other hand, Dixie was being moved by the three apes to the cells. She had to stay still and quiet during the way, even if she needed to yell at the apes and confront them if she could.

The apes, upon reaching one of the cells on the top floor, introduced Dixie inside and, immediately, activated the bars to lock her up. Dixie couldn't think well at the time; she only felt her whole body tremble and all her blood circulating to her feet continuously. The three apes approached the bars to speak to her.

"Don't worry, girl," the lead orangutan said with a serious look. "We won't mechanize you... But after this, we'll take you to DK Island and you'll tell us *where* you live with your siblings!"

"N-no... *Don't even think I'll tell you!*" Dixie replied, challenging them with a trembling voice. "*Don't think I'll allow you to harm my sister and cousins!*"

The apes immediately gave a warning look at Dixie's attitude, while she looked at them with a grudge and tears at the edge of her eyes.

"Hmm, so you're such a defiant child," the orangutan said, crossing his arms. "But let me tell you that *nobody* defies us, much less you, *who because of you and your family we ran out of animals, they left us* almost in ruin... But this won't stand this way."

"Were your parents the pair of apes who accompanied you and your siblings when you all were here?" the blue-lapel mandrill asked, raising his gaze.

"*T-they were m-my aunt and uncle,*" Dixie stuttered with hatred and shedding tears.

"I see... Because they didn't get out of the building that time you escaped."

"DARNED!" Dixie shouted too angrily at that moment, waving her feet. "*YOU DON'T DESERVE TO LIVE! YOU ARE-*"

Suddenly, one of the mandrills pointed and pressed the gun to Dixie's head to make her understand to keep quiet. Dixie just let her tears roll continuously down her cheeks and made small sobs.

"*Shut up or you will suffer the consequences,*" the mandrill threatened her firmly.

"Tell me something, girl," the lead orangutan said. "Is that little monkey with a red cap that's with you your boyfriend?"

"*N-n-no,*" Dixie replied reluctantly as her tears continued to roll down her cheeks. "Because of *your son*, not anymore."

"But I guess you're still loving him," the orangutan added, raising his gaze. "So, you're going to have to tell us later *where* your siblings are on DK Island; if we find them, we might consider leaving that little boyfriend of yours alive. But if you don't want to tell us... *we will make you see with your own eyes how we mechanized him,*" he said in a threatening tone. "And don't even think that's how you save yourself; we'll mechanize you later too and we'll go to DK Island to look for them... And who knows if we also take a few apes from that island."

"*NO!*" Dixie shouted at them again furiously. "*YOU'RE NOT GOING TO HURT ANY OF THEM-*"

Instantly, the lead orangutan pulled one of Dixie's curls, causing her to even slam herself against the bars.

"*We don't like that attitude of yours at all, little girl!*" the orangutan warned her. "*One more and we're going to go right now for that monkey boy and kill him in front of your eyes...* And anyway, we leave you with that warning so that you can decide later what will be your fate."

The three apes kept their gaze threatening towards Dixie and, a few seconds later, turned around and started walking to retreat. Meanwhile, Dixie stayed behind bars still with her tears rolling down her face... This time, without knowing what she could do at that moment...

On the other hand, in the laboratory, Diddy was still tied to his chair and struggling constantly to try to free his hands, but to no avail. He was getting so desperate that he didn't know what else he could do anymore. He began to remember Donkey, DK Island and the last night he was there, wishing more and more that he had not gone out that time.

Suddenly, one of the doors of the laboratory opened, and no one but Jemky appeared. Instantly, Diddy rolled his eyes at the sight of him and already assumed that he would go to bother him; just seeing him caused him enormous indignation and a desire to give him his comeuppance again if he could.

Jemky walked towards Diddy in normal steps, but looking at him seriously as if he wanted to reproach him for something.

"You can't attack me right now the way you are, monkey," Jemky said, smiling a little mockingly. "Now tell me... *Where did you leave those children?* We already know you made them disappear!" he added, taking him by the shirt and raising his voice.

Diddy just looked at him seriously, not wanting to answer that question.

"*Tell me!*" Jemky insisted, waving his shirt.

"No," Diddy replied coldly. "I won't tell you *anything*."

Jemky raised his gaze and looked at him mockingly, before letting go.

"Well, anyway..." he said, resting his hand on the back of another chair, "they couldn't be off this island, so our dads are going to find them... *And they'll mechanize you too!*" he added, letting out a few laughs.

Diddy, unable to respond and defend himself to that, just started grumbling and waving his feet in the air even though he couldn't.

"Oh, what's wrong, little monkey?" Jemky said in a mocking tone. "Oh, I know, are you also worried about Dixie?... Don't worry, nothing bad will happen to her; I'll prevent them from doing that mechanization to her and I'll take care of her and *keep her*. And you can stay with Jenny; after all, you're going to be just like her."

Diddy grumbled at him again, this time with more force and wanting to get out and confront him if he could at that moment, while Jemky laughed at him in front.

"*Look, be thankful I can't beat you up!*" Diddy yelled at him. "And I'd appreciate it if you get out of here right now, because I'm not happy with you at *all!*"

"Ah, I see, you still love Dixie," Jemky continued mockingly. "But what a pity, because she surely doesn't love you anymore because you didn't believe her that she had never cheated on you with me," he added laughing again in front of him. "You know something, Diddy? You are a fool; you believe everything, since we *were on DK Island*... But now, Dixie won't have a stupid monkey as a boyfriend anymore, *because I'm going* to stay with her and I'm going to love her much more than you, because seeing how you were, you're a coward."

"*Urgh, shut up, Jemky!*" Diddy interrupted, grumbling. "Stop throwing that in my face! You *just want to compete with me! You only care about having Dixie to believe you're the best!*... But do you know one thing? *I don't want to compete with you*, and yes, I dislike you, but I won't! What's more, believe me that if Dixie loved you, I'd let you both be happy if she wanted to, I wouldn't do that *childishness* that you made us to separate us... I'd obviously beat you up if you treated her badly."

There were a few seconds of silence as Diddy continued to look angrily at Jemky, who after Diddy told him that, just remained silent and confused.

"B-but... n-no, *of course not!*" Jemky stuttered. "How could I want to compete with you, monkey?! If you are stupid and credulous!"

"Hmm, and I see you're not willing to admit it," Diddy said, raising his gaze and rolling his eyes. "*Envious orangutan.*"

"*Urgh, but anyway... I'll stay with Dixie after all!*" Jemky replied, in a position not wanting to give up. "And you, you're going to die and become a robot like Jenny and those other three kids! You can stay with Jenny later anyways," he added laughing again, while Diddy continued to look at him with hatred. "Oh, wait, I forgot that you don't like pretty girls like Jenny... In addition to being a coward and credulous you're a coward-butterfly monkey."

"I'm not going to be criticized by an *idiotic* who thinks that by insisting he's going to get someone to respond to him," Diddy told him seriously.

Jemky stared at him in shock for a few seconds, but then was furious and slapped Diddy's face.

"For your information, *I have been responded*; a lot of girls," Jemky said mockingly. "It's called *perseverance* and it's something you don't have; I see you don't even have it with Dixie. But I'll win her love and I'll make her love me, much more than you, because I'll love her better!"

"Yeah, yeah, of course, whatever you say!" Diddy replied with a shrug. "Anyway, you don't love her! You don't care about her! You only care about having her to yourself, but you don't really care about her! You didn't even care about hurting her being Jenny... And you call '*perseverance*' groveling yourself for someone."

"You need to learn more, monkey," Jemky said, laughing a little. "I don't even know how you won Dixie over; girls don't like cowardly monkeys like you, they never want them! They like the brave, the rough, those who dare, those who do say nice things to them! You couldn't even tell her you liked him; she had to do it for you to top it off," he told him before starting laughing.

"*Look, stop meddling in my life, burnt-hairs!*" Diddy yelled, losing patience with him. "You really are tremendously envious! And I don't want to believe myself better than you, but if you do, then let me tell you that with all that you say about me, *Dixie loved me*, not you with your '*perseverance*'."

"*Urgh, you're a darn... fool monkey!*" Jemky replied by taking him by the shirt and smashing him into the chair a couple of times.

"And just look how you react!" Diddy said in a mocking tone. "You have nothing more to say. It hurts you because you know it's true."

"Oh, really?!" Jemky exclaimed furiously. "Well, you know what's going to hurt you the most?! That I *will have Dixie* this time! Dixie will be *mine*! And I'm going to love her more than you and she's going to love me more than you! I'll stay with her!"

"*Well, keep her if you want!*" Diddy shouted, emphasizing. "*Keep her, it's okay!* Anyway... now I love another girl."

"Huh! But what are you saying?!" Jemky replied, making a sarcastic expression. "Did you say... *another girl*? You're already talking foolishness, dumb monkey!"

"Well, yes! It's another girl!" Diddy replied. "And you know who?!"

"And who else are you going to love?!"

"*You, beautiful Jenny,*" Diddy replied, giving him a mischievous look.

Jemky looked at him with strangeness and confusion for a few seconds, but then he began to grumble at him gradually, this time much angrier that he even gave Diddy a strong slap and left him stunned for a couple of seconds... But then, Diddy started smiling at him mockingly.

"You make me laugh!" Diddy said, starting to laugh harder.

"Darn stupid monkey!" Jemky yelled, beginning to hit him continuously in the face.

"Oh, what's wrong? Don't you love me anymore, *Jenny?!'*" Diddy said mockingly as he continued to be attacked. "You who insisted so much to me too!"

Jemky grumbled much more and now took him roughly from the shirt and smashed him continuously against the chair. Diddy, trying to pretend he wasn't hurt by the attacks, just laughed in Jemky's face. Even so, a while later, Diddy was already reaching the limit.

"Hey!..." Diddy yelled as Jemky continued to attack him. *"Let me... burnt-hairs! Do you hate me so much?!"*

Jemky gave him one last slap while staring at him furiously.

"Burnt-hairs, annatto-hairs," Jemky mockingly imitated him. "You wish you had this shiny fur like mine!"

Suddenly, a silhouette entered through the door where Jemky had entered before.

"Oh, no!..." Diddy whispered, being shocked to see who it was.

Jemky turned to look and saw none other than *Melvyn*, who had walked into the lab as if he were a curious little child. Diddy began to panic as he tried to signal Melvyn to leave.

"What the?!" Jemky exclaimed, confused, but then regaining his normal posture. "Oh, is it serious, Melenky?! Why did you take Melvyn out right now?" he said to Melvyn. "You have to go help our dads look for those kids!"

But Melvyn, now with 'autonomy of his own', just ignored Jemky and went to Diddy to take him by the hand as if he were a little child who wanted to play.

"Hey, what's wrong with you?!" Jemky asked Melvyn. "Why are you pulling the monkey's hand?!"

Diddy just remained serious as if he didn't know anything, and didn't answer any word to Melvyn. Even so, he tried to signal with his eyes to give him the order to leave that place, but that was in vain.

"Melenky!" Jemky told him, pulling him away from Diddy. "Hey, what's wrong with you?!... Oh, Melenky! I'm going to look for you right now!"

Immediately, Jemky headed to the door and left the laboratory, retreating completely, which was a small relief for Diddy... But now, he had Melvyn in front of him, who kept pulling his hand.

"Melvyn! What are you doing here?!" Diddy whispered desperately. "You have to leave here! Go, get out of here!"

But Melvyn ignored him and kept trying to insist that he get out of his chair.

"Melvyn, get out of here, please!" Diddy insisted. "Those apes are going to see you! You should leave!"

Suddenly, another silhouette peeked through the door... This time, it was Jenny, who also as soon as she entered, was heading towards Diddy.

"Oh, no, no, no! Jenny, no!" begged Diddy. "Please leave here too!... *No!*"

Without giving him a second, Jenny went straight to hug Diddy as if she was excited to see him. She, while holding him up, began to smile at him in a flirtatious way and then gave him a kiss on the cheek.

"No, no, Jenny, please, no!" Diddy continued pleading as he couldn't get away from her this time being trapped in the chair.

Jenny started kissing Diddy more on the face, which was making him uncomfortable and he tried to move away with just his head.

"No, no, leave me, Jenny!" Diddy exclaimed, stretching his head up and sideways and waving his feet. "Oh, stupid Jemky, why did you teach her to be like that too?!" he whispered to himself.

Jenny continued to kiss him more, so Diddy kept trying to push his face away as best he could.

"*N-NO, JENNY!*" Diddy shouted as he managed to get his face away from hers and got her to calm down. "No! Don't be like that burnt-hair Jemky trained you! Forget what he taught you... And don't hit me if that's what you plan to do now!"

Jenny gave him an angry look and only showed him her tongue as a sign of mockery and contempt, and then turned away from him.

"Now... I would appreciate the two of you leaving *here*," Diddy ordered Jenny and Melvyn. "What's more, go to the top floor here and leave this building, then get on a ship that's out there, also tell Mandy and Ricky if you find-"

Suddenly, an idea came to Diddy's mind, and he smiled at them both for a moment.

"Uhh, wait, wait, don't leave yet!" Diddy told them before looking around. "Listen! Get me out of this chair," he whispered. "Just press a few buttons that are here behind the backrest."

Jenny and Melvyn looked at him strangely for a few seconds and just shrugged and ignored him, then turned around and headed for the door.

"Hey!" Diddy exclaimed, waving his feet. "Don't leave! Help! We're friends!"

But they both went on their way and were about to walk out the door. Diddy, not wanting to give up, came up with one last alternative to be listened to.

"Jenny! Come here!... Uhh, I love you, Jenny!" Diddy said quickly, which got her to at least turn to see him. "Yeah, yeah, I love you, pretty Jenny... Can you come a moment?! And bring Melvyn too!"

Jenny remained still for a moment, but then, she took Melvyn's arm and they both headed back towards Diddy.

"Okay... Uhh, Jenny, you love me, right?" he asked with a forced smile, to which Jenny smiled too and nodded to him. "Well... If you really love me, how about... you take me out of this chair by pressing some buttons that are back here? And I'll be your boyfriend next month so you can kiss me as many times as you want," he added, keeping his forced smile, trying to sound natural and hoping Jenny and Melvyn would give in that way.

Jenny began to smile little by little and, along with Melvyn, went towards the chair where Diddy was...

Chapter End Notes

In case there is any confusion, these are the names of those criminal apes:

- Ray: Orangutan lead of the group, who wears a green-lapel and is Jemky's father.
- Manny: blue-lapel mandrill and Mandrew's father.
- Terry: red-lapel mandrill and Melenky's father.
- Rusty: brown-lapel mandrill and Rocky's father.
- Will: black-lapel orangutan.

I don't name them that in the dialogues because they're enemies that appeared recently (well, they appeared in chapter 2 and Dixie has also mentioned them before, but it's just now where they already have more participation in the story).

And I don't have their designs because I still don't know how to draw adult kongs well.

Chapter 70: Confrontations and Reunions

In one of the cells, Dixie was with a lowered and dull look, even emitting a few low sobs between moments. Her hands and feet were bound with those shackles that she could not even get up even to look out through the bars. She prayed with all her might that all the events that had occurred since the previous day had been just a bad dream, and that maybe she would actually be on Hurricane Island sleeping with Diddy and hoping to be able to return to DK Island in the three weeks left... but no, the reality was different and hopes in Dixie were on the verge of being extinguished.

Suddenly, footsteps began to be heard nearby. Dixie, peeking out a little, saw a small silhouette entering the ward. Seeing it in better clarity and detail, she realized that it was *Jemky*, so she rolled her eyes and began to show all the disgust in his presence.

Jemky went straight to the cell where Dixie was being held and placed his hands on the bars. Then, he smiled at her, even though Dixie was looking at him very reluctantly.

"Hi, bab-"

"What do you want?!" Dixie interrupted as she looked at him in disgust.

"Don't worry, we're not going to fight," Jemky replied, speaking to her in a sweet tone and smiling. "Rather... *I came to get you out of here*," he whispered.

"W-what?!" Dixie exclaimed, confused at what he said.

"That's right," Jemky reaffirmed, looking everywhere around him, and then looked back at her. "I'll get you out of here, Dixie. I won't allow my dad and the others to harm you, let alone turn you into a mechanical kid."

Dixie looked at him with extreme oddity; it was obvious that she found it quite suspicious that Jemky would say such a thing to her, so she just rolled her eyes and looked away from him.

"Hey, hey, what do you say, pretty?" Jemky said, leaning further into the bars. "I'm serious... Look, I'll open the bars for you to believe me."

Jemky withdrew for a moment, and actually went to the entrance of the room where the button that opened the cells was located. Seconds later, he pressed the button, and the cell bars opened.

Dixie could have escaped right then and there if not for the shackles and rope in her hair she was tied with. Even so, she was invaded by the survival instinct and, forcing her tied hands and feet, managed to get up and tried to walk towards the exit... But the shackles only made her stumble.

"Wait, wait, not so fast, girl," Jemky said, helping her up, and then rummaged through the pockets of his vest. "Let me help you."

Jemky took out a few small keys from his pockets, and then stopped to stare at Dixie.

"Listen to me, Dixie... I'll get you out of here, I'll help you escape," Jemky said, smiling confidently. "I'll take you to DK Island if you want, I'm not going to say anything to my dad-"

"And what is this about?!" Dixie interrupted, looking at him suspiciously. "You are up to something."

"No, I'm serious!" Jemky replied. "I'll take you to DK Island myself," he added, smiling.

"And don't even think I'll give you a chance if that's what you want in return," Dixie told him firmly.

"Hey, I'm not telling you that," Jemky replied. "I really tell you, I'm going to help you," he added before subtly taking her hair and speaking in a sweet tone. "Dixie... I care about you very much; I'm not going to let them turn you into a mechanical girl."

"Do you really care about me that much?" Dixie asked, looking at him with an apparently sweet look, but then a defiant one. "So, I'll go with you... but if *we also take Diddy*."

"Urgh, what the heck with you?!" Jemky replied, changing to an annoyed expression.

"Oh, well! I care about Diddy, and if you care so much about me, then take me with him too!"

Jemky showed himself frustrated for a moment at Dixie's response.

"Look... That monkey doesn't..." Jemky mumbled slowly, but then spoke to her normally again. "Alright!... We'll take Diddy too, okay?"

"Well, but..." Dixie said, looking at him strangely. "You still haven't told me why this is about. You want something; just be direct if you're plotting something!"

"Oh, darn! Okay, okay!" Jemky exclaimed, rolling his eyes. "Look, I can help you escape, what's more, if you're wondering how: I can take you in one of the boats or on Dad's jet ski, and I'm serious about that. But only... if you give me a chance to date you, baby," he said, adding a mischievous tone in the last sentence.

"Yeah, yeah, I already know that tale, but don't even think I'm going to-" Dixie exclaimed, but suddenly, she stopped to think... that she might have a *last alternative*. "Uhh, wait, Jemky... And so just to know... what do you plan to do with me if I agree to go on a date with you?"

"If you mean what we're going to do, well... whatever you want," he replied mischievously. "We can go outside to walk and sit for a while to talk about whatever, I can invite you to something to eat, and... if you want, we can kiss too," he said, raising his gaze.

"Ahh, I see," Dixie replied, pensively. "And if I accept you... will you really help me get out of here?"

"That's right," Jemky replied, determined.

"And... Diddy too?" Dixie asked, smiling.

"Y-yes... That monkey too," Jemky mumbled, but keeping his smile.

"Okay! So, let's go," she replied, smiling confidently.

Jemky immediately changed his expression at what Dixie told him, looked at her strangely for a few seconds, but then smiled at her again little by little.

"Are you telling me that you accept?" Jemky asked, lifting his gaze.

"Yes, I said yes," Dixie replied, smiling at him. "You know, Jemky?... Thinking about it... I think it wouldn't hurt if you and I give each other a chance," she added, trying to sound flirtatious.

"Hey, are you really telling me, pretty Dixie?" Jemky asked, giving her a few little pushes and smiling.

"That's right, let's go right now if you want," Dixie added, smiling at him in kind. "But yes! Don't let your dad and the other apes see us."

"Don't worry, I know how to hide well here," Jemky replied as he prepared the keys he had taken from his pockets. "Well, so let's go."

Jemky inserted the keys into the shackles that Dixie was carrying: first he released the one on her feet, so she was able to start to get up. Dixie stared at him when he was unlocking the shackle on her hands, but before that, Jemky put his hand inside another of his pockets while unlocking Dixie's shackle.

The moment Dixie finally had her limbs free, she tried to lunge at Jemky... But at the same time, he pulled out a gun and pointed it at her immediately.

"Ahh, so you thought you were going to get away with it, didn't you, baby?" Jemky said mockingly as he pointed at her.

Dixie remembered that similar event on DK Island, and tried to lunge at him again to take the gun, but unfortunately, he took a second one from his other pocket and pointed it at her.

"No, no, no, you're not going to get away with it," Jemky added now pointing both guns at her.

"N-no! *No!* Just forget it!" Dixie exclaimed, hurrying to pick up the shackles again while feeling frustrated at having failed in her maneuver.

"Hey, hey, no, girl!" Jemky said, stopping her. "You already said yes, *we're going to go on a date together now.*"

"*No!*" Dixie replied, trying to object, but with two guns pointed at her it was in vain. "I'll never date you! *I WON'T DATE-*"

"*Silence!*" Jemky interrupted her, pressing both guns against her. "And don't try to attack me, Dixie."

"You're not going to shoot, right?" Dixie said, looking at him defiantly.

"Well... I really don't want to hurt you," he replied calmly, lifting his gaze. "But... I can go for Diddy right now... and I have no mercy for him. Now walk! We'll have a date together!" he said, smiling and pushing her with his weapons.

Dixie, being tense and unable to defend herself at the time even with her hair, continued to obey Jemky's order while she was thinking about what to do. They arrived at the stairs, where they both started to go down, but at the same time, Dixie didn't want to give up on taking alternatives.

"No, no, I don't love you!" Dixie replied as they got down, despite not being able to execute any attacking moves. *"If you want, lock me back in those cells, but I'm not going to go with you!"*

"First of all, beware that attitude, girl! And secondly, you already said yes, don't get away with it!"

"No! I don't want you... Hopefully your dad will show up right now and punish you!"

Jemky, as they walked down the stairs and he pointed the guns at her, also began to laugh a little at what Dixie said.

"To heck with my dad's punishments!" he said with a shrug. "And let's hurry up before they find us."

"No, Jemky!" Dixie replied, stopping. "I won't go anyway! Leave me in the cells better!"

"Ugh, you really are stubborn!" Jemky exclaimed, stomping.

"At least tell me we're going to free Diddy too," Dixie said, looking at him angrily.

"No! Not that monkey!" Jemky snapped.

"Well, I'm not going then!" Dixie reaffirmed. *"You have to take me with Diddy... Jenny!"*

"Don't call me Jenny!" he replied, giving her a little hair tug. "Huh! With Diddy. And did you really think I would care about him? I don't understand how you could love that chicken monkey."

"Well, yes, I love him!" Dixie stressed firmly. "I've always loved him! We both loved each other and *you ruined it! All the time you tried to ruin it!*"

"Me? Don't make me laugh," Jemky replied mockingly and with a few laughs. "Yeah, of course, I ruined it. But don't you also remember that you used to apply signals to let him know of your feelings and you were upset because he didn't get it?... Oh, wow, you say you love him *so much* and you could not even tell him directly that you liked him, even when you knew he liked you," he added sarcastically before laughing. "You and that monkey are just as *cowards, insecure and dumb!*"

At that comment, Dixie began to grumble and look at him with all the hatred. That only made her think much more about how nothing would have happened if she had acted better three months ago.

"Oh, don't worry, precious Dixie," he said in a sweet tone, approaching to caress her cheeks, but at the same time, holding the guns. "What if you better give me a real chance? I'll know how to love you very much, I'll know how to take care of you and I'll give you everything you want... I've always loved you, Dixie, from the first moment I saw you arrive at school," he added, moving closer and gently taking her hair. Instantly, Dixie tried to take him by the arms to make some defensive maneuver, but Jemky didn't allow her. "Hey, hey, so funny! Don't think you can take them off me!"

"Ugh, I hate you," Dixie grumbled, instantly still.

"Oh, don't get upset, precious," Jemky said again, smiling at her. "Come on, give me a chance, even if it's just for a little while... If you want, let's make Diddy jealous again, so you could-"

Dixie, unable to resist any longer, lunged completely at Jemky and gave him a hard push, sending him downhill from the stairs.

"*Hey!*" Jemky exclaimed as he tripped and rolled down the stairs.

Instantly, Dixie began to speed down the stairs, to the point of throwing herself down the steps with her four limbs. She managed to get to the entrance to the corridors, when suddenly... Jemky appeared by surprise, taking her by the arm.

"*You think you're so clever, don't you?!*" Jemky replied, holding and pointing at her.

A few seconds later, Dixie gave him a few blows to get him to drop his guns... but soon after, Jemky fired a shot towards the ceiling, causing a hearing daze to Dixie in addition to a scare that left her paralyzed instantly.

"Look, *you're starting to get on me, girl,*" Jemky said this time in a threatening tone and pressing the guns against her more rudely. "*One more and I'm going to see Diddy right now and make him pay the consequences in front of your eyes.* You're really headstrong like your fool ex-boyfriend... *And one more thing:* you'd better behave yourself, or else... I can tell my dad that you *were the one who shot me on DK Island*; be thankful that I didn't rat you out just because I really wouldn't want them to finish you off... Because that's what my dad would do if he found out it was you."

Dixie, now trembling after Jemky's shot, just looked at him in fear as if facing the group of apes. She would have already beaten him up if not for the guns he was carrying.

"Now walk and listen to me!" Jemky ordered, giving her small pushes with his guns. "Let's go outside, okay? We'll have our date, and then I'll help you escape. *And beware some other counterattack, girl.*"

Dixie just followed him while she begged inside her mind that some miraculous event would happen at that moment so she could flee, because if she got it, she could even go for Diddy to continue with the escape... Suddenly, Dixie remembered *a detail*... She wanted to ask Jemky which way he would take her... but she better decided to walk in his footsteps for a while.

Jemky was going to go down to the first floor with Dixie... But seconds later, she grabbed his arm, this time without applying force, but earning a strange look from him.

"Hey... wait!" Dixie told him, trying to do her best pretense. "What do you think if we go there in the corridors?" she added, smiling.

"*What do you intend to do now?*" Jemky asked, looking at her suspiciously.

"Uh, well, it's quieter to walk there, don't you think?" Dixie replied before giving him a few little pushes in a flirtatious manner. "I was also thinking about ... if you think it's better that we have our date here inside the building?"

"You're up to something! You don't fool me!" Jemky replied as he continued to point his guns at her.

"I'm serious, what am I going to be up to if I can't do anything now?" Dixie reaffirmed, remaining serious. Then, she smiled at him again in a flirtatious way and tapped his face. "Besides, all you want is to get to kiss me and for me to reciprocate and love you, right?... Well, so, why not better

our date here inside the building? We'll have better privacy," she added, winking and still smiling at him.

Jemky looked at her somewhat strangely at first, but then seemed to can't help but smile at Dixie's sudden attitude towards him.

"Oh, Dixie, you weren't like that," he said with a mischievous tone and look. "I like the idea, you know?... But also let me tell you, you're *not* going to give me orders here," he added, pressing his weapons against her again.

"B-but, wait..." Dixie stammered with a forced smile, thinking about what else to say. "Uh, and didn't you use to talk to Diddy this way while you were Jenny?"

"Look, Jenny's was just a performance, you know?!"

"Well, okay, *but*..." Dixie said, trying to stay calm and thinking about saying some alternative last words. "You who have said so much that Diddy is a coward because he didn't respond to Jenny's advances, don't you think you would be the same as him if you reject my proposal? You'd be a coward now!"

Jemky made a gesture of disgust at what Dixie told him, began to grumble a little and looked as if he didn't know what to answer... as if Dixie had hit him right in his pride.

"Urgh... L-look..." Jemky stammered, looking confused but annoyed at the same time. "Okay! It's okay!... After all... I think you're right that we'd have better privacy," he added in a mischievous tone in the last sentence and winking. "So, what are you waiting for, pretty?! Walk!"

Jemky, with both guns in hand, pushed Dixie with them before starting to walk through the corridors of the second floor. Dixie, on the other hand, began in a sneaky way to take a look at every corner of the corridors... as if she were looking for *something*; one *last alternative* that she begged with all her being to work for her.

"Well, we're already here in the corridors," Jemky said, stopping Dixie and holding her arm. "Now we can have our romantic date, pretty," he added, smiling. "Do you want us to talk about us first or kiss?"

"Uhh, no, no, no!" Dixie interrupted, forcing a smile and trying to look into the perpendicular corridors. "I mean, it's that... Uhh, better in another of the c-corridors; I feel that someone is going to find us here."

"Your ex-boyfriend Diddy is a prisoner right now in case you don't remember," Jemky told her mockingly. "He's not going to find out anything."

"No, I'm not speaking for him, but for the others; remember that they're looking for those other kids," Dixie replied. "You don't want your father and the other apes to see us, do you?"

"Oh, but you wanted to come here, didn't you?"

"But let's go somewhere else! I don't like this one... And don't be a coward as you say to Diddy!"

Jemky, though looking at her strangely, complied with Dixie's order, and they both began to walk somewhere else. Dixie was still on the lookout for what she was looking for, but as they kept

walking, she couldn't find it. She was beginning to despair so much that she even began to look around in a less concealed way, which Jemky also began to notice.

"What's wrong with you?" Jemky asked, looking at her suspiciously.

"Uhh... Nothing, nothing!" Dixie replied, starting to look nervous, to which Jemky continued to look at her like that, but they kept walking.

Suddenly, as if a small miracle that Dixie begged so much to appear, she caught sight of a silhouette passing through a perpendicular corridor.

"*Mandy!*" Dixie shouted from a distance.

"What?!" Jemky exclaimed, looking at her in confusion.

"Uhh... Yeah, it's Mandy, look!" Dixie told Jemky, feigning surprise, before calling that kong girl again. "Mandy, come here!"

"Say what?! *One minute!*" Jemky exclaimed.

Mandy, as soon as Dixie named her, rushed to her and, as if she were her lifelong friend, went straight to hug her as if she were excited to see her. Dixie tried to pretend that she was confused at the time.

"*But what the heck?!*" Jemky exclaimed, showing shock. "*Hey, Mandrew, what's wrong with you?!* Are you also playing with those mechanical kids-"

Suddenly, Jemky opened his eyes wider, looking a little nervous, and immediately grabbed Mandy by the hair to talk to her.

"Mandrew, I'll explain it to you later!" Jemky hurriedly whispered to her. "B-but don't tell my dad that I took Dixie out-"

Mandy made a strange gesture and gave Jemky a few slaps and lock pulls wildly.

"*Hey, hey, what's wrong with you, Mandrew?! Why are you attacking me?!!*" Jemky exclaimed, covering his face and trying to push Mandy away.

Suddenly... Dixie caught sight of another known silhouette nearby.

"*Ricky! Ricky, over here!*" Dixie shouted hurriedly.

"*W-what the heck?!!*" Jemky exclaimed before giving Mandy a hard push and pushing her away. "*Wait a minute! Rocky, what the heck with you too?!!*"

Suddenly, Ricky had appeared too and, in the same way, headed towards Dixie. Meanwhile, Jemky was quite confused by those sudden apparitions, but he seemed to have no idea what was happening to them now.

"*What are you guys doing?! Why do you play with your mechanical monkeys right now?!!*" Jemky exclaimed to Mandy and Ricky.

"*Mandy! Ricky!*" Dixie called them before pointing to Jemky. "*Tickle him!*"

"Say what?!" Jemky exclaimed. "Hey, and why do you call them that?"

Without giving him any more time, Mandy and Ricky lunged at Jemky and began tickling him while laughing as if they were playing.

"W-wa-wait!" Jemky exclaimed, shuddering and starting to laugh inevitably and with difficulty freeing himself since he had two guns in his hand and didn't think of dropping them. *"W-what's wrong with you?! LET ME!"*

Dixie, waiting a few more seconds for Jemky to have no control over himself, lunged at him too, but this time giving him a few hits apart from the tickling of Mandy and Ricky. Then, Dixie grabbed Jemky's hand tightly and turned it back, causing him to scream a little in pain between laughter; instantly, Dixie managed to take one of Jemky's guns.

"HEY! GIVE ME THAT BACK!" Jemky yelled as he continued to be cornered by Mandy and Ricky.

Dixie was going to get the second gun. But with a free hand now, Jemky was able to give Mandy and Ricky strong hits, which didn't seem to cause them pain, but managed to push them away.

Dixie immediately went on alert and grabbed Mandy and Ricky's arm to bring them to her and protect them.

"Let's go, let's leave quickly!" Dixie whispered to both of them.

Dixie started running aimlessly along with the two of them, carrying the gun she had taken from Jemky.

"HEY, COME HERE!" Jemky yelled at them, starting to go after her.

Dixie managed to turn into a corridor in time, before Jemky saw them. She was running in a hurry along with Ricky and Mandy, who followed her aimlessly. Along the way, Dixie was also trying to untie the rope she had wrapped in her hair, although it was quite difficult due to how tangled it was.

"Listen!" Dixie whispered to Mandy and Ricky on the way as the rope continued to be untied. "We'll go to the lab, get Diddy out of there, look for Jenny and Melvyn and leave this place, okay?! And please, I ask you not to stray from us, keep-"

"Come here!" Jemky suddenly appeared, pulling Dixie from the rope in her hair.

Dixie immediately went on alert and pointed the gun at Jemky, at the same time he also pointed it at her while holding her arm.

"You think you're very smart, don't you, Dixie?" Jemky threatened her by pressing the gun.

Instantly, by instinct, and without any other alternative, Dixie rushed to press the trigger of the gun against Jemky... but this one didn't fire. Dixie pressed it again repeatedly, but the gun wouldn't release any projectile, so Jemky started laughing at her.

"You don't even know how to shoot!" Jemky said, laughing as he continued to point at her. "What a pity you can't do the same to me-"

Suddenly, Mandy and Ricky pounced again on Jemky and began to slap him nonstop.

"Hey, hey, what the heck with you?!" Jemky exclaimed, trying to dodge them. *"And why are you defending Dix-"*

Dixie again lunged at Jemky and tried to snatch the other gun from him. But almost instantly, Jemky hit Mandy and Ricky in one swift motion, and then lunged at Dixie, cornering her toward the wall. Dixie stood still... but suddenly, she saw something approaching behind him that caused her a little excitement.

"You've had enough of me, stupid girl," Jemky said, looking at her menacingly. *"Better-"*

Dixie gave him a single slap and a kick to push him away.

Suddenly, Jemky also began to be attacked by three other silhouettes that suddenly appeared behind him, who gave him repeated hits, and one of them even knocked him to the ground. Instantly, Dixie grabbed Jemky's hand again and tried to bend it back so she could snatch the gun, this time successfully.

"W-what the heck?!" Jemky exclaimed as he was pinned face down on the floor. *"Let me... Urgh, it's you, stupid monkey! HOW THE HECK DID YOU GET OUT?!"*

Dixie, this time with both weapons, now kept pointing it at Jemky while smiling victoriously at those who had imprisoned him: it was none other than *Diddy*, who had also come in the company of *Jenny* and *Melvyn*.

"WHAT THE HECK DID YOU DO NOW, MONKEY?!" Jemky yelled at Diddy.

"It's none of your business, burnt-hairs!" Diddy replied as he struggled to keep him by the arms behind his back. *"And what were you doing with Dixie?!"*

"Well, she told me to get her out of the cell!" Jemky exclaimed. *"We were kissing until you came!"*

"Hey, you darn stupid!" Dixie shouted at him, pressing the guns sternly against him.

"Ah, don't play crazy, Dixie!" Jemky replied before speaking to Diddy. *"And you know what she told me, monkey?! That I kiss better than you!"*

"Ah, really?" Diddy asked in a mocking tone. "Yeah, I've confirmed that too, *Jenny*."

Instantly, Jemky grumbled and even armed himself with strength to be able to kick Diddy and free himself from him, Melvyn and Jenny. Immediately, he stood up and lunged at Diddy to start beating him.

"Urgh, I hate you, DARN MONKE-"

"HEY! You stay still this time, you burnt-hairs!" Dixie interrupted, pointing the guns at his head and stopping him instantly, before hitting him a couple of times with them. *"Demented orangutan!"*

"Stupids!" Jemky exclaimed furiously as he could no longer do anything... before looking shocked to realize well of all those present. *"W-wha-what?! O-one moment... Wait a minute!... W-what the heck?! What is Jenny doing here too?! Why the heck is she working?! I'M NOT CONTROLLING HER!"*

Diddy and Dixie looked at each other seriously, and then signaled to each other with the look that they should leave. Dixie kept pointing the guns at Jemky while Diddy held the arms consecutively to those kids of Jenny's quartet.

"Let's go! Let's all leave now!" Diddy exclaimed.

Diddy, Dixie and Jenny's quartet started running in a hurry, leaving Jemky behind and giving him no answer.

"HEY, COME BACK! I WANT AN EXPLANATION!" Jemky yelled at them, starting to chase them too.

The six were now running, with Jemky chasing them as well, though they no longer had any concerns with his presence. A couple of minutes later, Diddy and Dixie with Jenny's quartet stopped for a while in a corridor near the main staircase room and, peering around the corners to make sure there was no presence of some of the apes or Jemky's quartet, they began to head towards the stairs. For her part, Dixie also managed to finish untying the rope she carried in her hair and took it with her along with the guns, in case she needed any of those elements.

"Okay, don't escape from us this time, please," Diddy whispered to Jenny's quartet. *"We'll just go up there."*

Diddy and Dixie took each of the quartet by the arms and started climbing the stairs, releasing them later so they could climb faster.

"Diddy!" Dixie exclaimed, smiling and hugging him quickly on the way. "How did you manage to free yourself from those chairs?"

"Jenny and Melvyn had arrived; they helped me escape. I'll tell you better later," Diddy replied in the same way as they went up. "By the way, I had to lie to Jenny that I'll be her boyfriend next month; that's the only way she helped me," he whispered.

"Hmm, yeah, I had to say something similar to Jemky to take me through the corridors, so I could find Mandy and Ricky to help me."

"I loved seeing that stupid orangutan's face when I answered him," Diddy said, smiling a little. "How did you manage to get out of the cells, by the way?"

"Jemky himself freed me, of course, in exchange for wanting a date with me, but he didn't get his way," she finished, smiling again. "By the way, thanks for showing up, Diddy."

"Now we can continue," Diddy replied, smiling back.

The group had finally reached the top floor. Diddy and Dixie barely had time to be glad to see each other safe. They immediately went to the door that led to the corner where they had deployed that ramp. This time, Diddy and Dixie wanted to think that now they would have everything ready to escape with everyone from that place... But when they got there, they saw something that put them on alert instantly: the drop-down ramp was no longer like that... which meant that the apes may have realized that something wasn't right and therefore may have discovered the kong children.

"Oh, no, no, no!" Diddy exclaimed, in despair. "Maybe they already discovered everything!"

"No, I don't think so, maybe they've just picked up the ramp," Dixie added. "Maybe they're all still inside the ship; I don't think they've seen them."

"L-let's see..." Diddy said.

Diddy looked again for the button that unfolded the ramp and pressed it immediately, which opened the wall outwards, and the ramp began to unfold until it descended to the outside floor. At the end, the group peeked at the ramp to look out, although the view was difficult because it was late at night and it was dark; they could barely see certain silhouettes of the vegetation that existed, besides a slight blizzard that ran.

"The ship was over there, let's go fast," Dixie pointed in one direction.

"Hey, Dixie," Diddy said, pointing to the objects she was carrying. "Are you going to carry that rope and those guns?"

"Just in case."

Diddy and Dixie led the quartet through the ramp so they could carefully descend. It took them almost a couple of minutes to reach the ground, with some difficulty on the way, but achieving it in the end.

"Where is the ship?" Dixie asked, looking around.

"Uhh... wasn't it over there?" Diddy pointed to a huge silhouette that he could see.

The atmosphere was so dark that only the huge and rocky wall that surrounded that islet could be recognized. The rest of the elements that were seen were of the vegetation that was nearby, of which the silhouette was barely visible. Even so, Diddy and Dixie immediately began to mobilize along with the quartet and ran in the direction of where they had seen the ship.

"DIDDY! DIXIE!... IS IT YOU?!"

Diddy and Dixie stopped in their tracks and took the arms of the quartet, stopping them as well. They had just heard a voice quite known to them that, although it didn't represent a danger to them, it did generate uncertainty of knowing that it would be on that island. Both turned to look and, despite the darkness that existed, they could notice a few silhouettes that belonged to the very *animals that were from the circus*; they didn't seem to be all there, but about a full dozen did.

"W-what?! H-how?!" Dixie exclaimed, all in confusion. "Are they..."

"The circus guys!" Diddy exclaimed, also surprised, but remembering something. "Did they manage to come here?!"

"Wait, what do you mean with 'manage'?" Dixie asked, looking at him strangely.

"Oh, it's that... Since I didn't find you at home, I went to tell them about Jenny's quartet so they could help me save those other children and find out what was going on there. Then I went back home to look for you again, but I only saw those evil apes prowling the house and heard them saying that the ship was going to sail, and I had to run immediately."

"W-what?!" Dixie exclaimed, confused and at the same time regretting not having been home that afternoon and, at the same time, with some concern for the animals. "B-but... they have to leave

here! They can't walk around this place!"

"*Diddy! Dixie!*" the animals called them from a distance. "They are the same ones, right?" they murmured among themselves. "*Hey! It's Diddy and Dixie?!... Wait, they're bringing four more children, aren't they their little friends?*"

"Let's go see them, before those apes find them!" Dixie whispered to Diddy.

Diddy and Dixie went with Jenny's quartet to where the animals that were from the circus were, among them: two medium-sized elephants, tigers, a rhino, a bear, a zebra, some gorillas and some lions. Both were also beginning to worry about them because it would pose a huge risk if the evil apes found out about them.

"Hey! W-what are you doing here?!" Diddy asked them, reaching towards them.

"Yes, it's you!" the animals exclaimed, each greeting them with excitement. "Hi, friends, how good that you're fine! H-how-"

"Wait, wait, wait!" Diddy interrupted, calming them down. "Look... We'll explain everything to you afterwards, but now, please, you have to leave! This place is extremely dangerous; here-"

"But you told us to follow you," an elephant interrupted. "You had told us that your four little friends were a kind of robots, that they tried to kidnap you and that it was likely that the missing children of the shelter were those other children you were with."

"Indeed!" Diddy hurriedly told them. "All that is true; we have verified it."

"And by the way, what are they doing with you too?" a tiger asked, pointing to Jenny's quartet. "Weren't they bad kids?"

"Uh, it's a long explanation, but they're robots," Dixie replied, taking Mandy's arm, and then pressing the button on her ear with which her head was opened, leaving the animals shocked to the extreme. "Or well... and they're not robots exactly; they're *kids turned into* robots; they've been mechanized!"

"*What?!?*" the animals exclaimed, all shocked. "So..."

"Yes, yes, that same thing," Diddy replied. "In short: they were normal kids who were made robots by a group of evil apes, and yes... that means the four of them are already... Well, *you know*. Oh, and those apes plan to do the same with those other kids... And here has been Mr. Pinky too! Those apes did something to him!"

"*W-what?! Even Mr. Pinky?!?*" the animals exclaimed again, looking at each other in confusion. "What kind of place is this?! What's going on here?!"

"We'll explain more details later," Diddy replied earnestly and quickly. "But now, please we ask you, go back to Hurricane Island! And I really want you to excuse me if you came here for us; I didn't know how serious this was, and to begin with, I had to come fast because I saw those evil apes around the house and I heard they had Dixie on the ship."

"Oh, no, no, not at all!" one of the elephants replied with a firm posture. "We want to help you! What's more, you can come with us-"

"No!" Dixie replied. "Don't worry, you guys have to leave here! I know those apes; they're really evil! They can hurt you if they see you all here! Look, they even carry guns; these are some that we take from their sons!" she added, showing them the pair of guns she was carrying. "And their sons are those bad kids from our school, by the way."

"Besides, we were already leaving!" Diddy added. "Over there is the ship we were building on Hurricane Island; we have the children and Mr. Pinky there, so we have to get them out of here!... If they are. By the way, we had come to check that."

"Or why don't you all come too?" Dixie offered.

"We had brought a ship too, it's over there," one of the gorillas pointed to a part of the stream that surrounded the islet.

"Okay, so we're leaving right now," Diddy replied quickly. "But we're leaving!"

Diddy and Dixie along with Jenny's quartet headed towards where they had spotted the ship... They both begged in their minds with all their being that the herd of kong children and Mr. Pinky were in there; if so, their rescue mission would be almost completely finished and they would have finally overcome that situation.

"Stay here for a moment," Dixie told the quartet before speaking to Diddy. "Can you hold this for me here?" she said, handing him the rope and weapons.

The quartet stayed on the banks of the stream with Diddy, while Dixie headed off to inspect. With a jump to previous speed, Dixie twisted her hair so she could reach the deck of the ship, and then immediately headed towards the cabins to make sure the herd was still there. For his part, Diddy expected to receive a positive response from Dixie as soon as she returned.

"Hey, Diddy!" a zebra whispered, approaching with the rest of the animals towards the scene.

"Yeah?"

"And are you and Dixie already on good terms or something?" he asked him with some insecurity.

Diddy looked at them strangely and felt some discomfort at that question, since even he didn't really know a clear answer to that situation.

"Uhh... Hey, this is not the time to talk about that," Diddy replied quietly. "But at least I could say that-"

"Diddy!" Dixie called him as she left the cabin. From the expression she had, it was clear what she had to say. "N-no... They're not here!"

"*What?!* Oh, no, don't tell me that!" Diddy exclaimed, panicking. "So, those apes might have taken them back to the building!"

Both maintained a panicked expression, while they were again feeling an enormous frustration and wondered when everything would finally go well for them.

"W-we have to go back inside! Let's go!" Dixie said, getting off the ship and returning to dry land.

"They may have them in the lab!" Diddy added.

"Hey!" the animals called them. "W-what are you talking about?! Did you keep the kids here before?!"

"Yes, and they're gone; they may have been taken back into that building!" Dixie replied desperately. "You! Please, you have to leave, seriously! For your sake, get out of here!"

"Wait, wait, wait!" a rhino replied. "We can help you! Where do you say those children are?"

"No, no, no, you don't worry!" Diddy told them, trying to calm them down, even if he couldn't himself. "We really thank you, but seriously, this place is very dangerous and much more inside that building."

"Those apes don't have even a drop of mercy, believe it!" Dixie added in the same way. "If you go in there and those apes see you, they won't hesitate to finish you off. You guys just get out of here, please."

Diddy and Dixie, without telling them more, started running in the direction of the building.

"Hey, no!" the animals exclaimed, trying to follow them. *"We're going to help you!"*

"No, please, no!" Diddy replied on the way. "It's serious, it's extremely dangerous for you to come! It's for your sake, we don't want to expose you!"

Without giving them any more opportunity to continue insisting, both continued to head towards the ramp to climb back up to the building. Suddenly, on the way they realized that Jenny's quartet were also running with them.

"No, no, no!" Diddy exclaimed, stopping them along with Dixie. "Stay out here too! What's more, leave here with those animals to Hurricane Island!"

"Uh, I think there's no time, Diddy. They don't want to leave and even want to come with us to take the children out."

"Oh, but it's better they just stay here," Diddy replied. "They'll be exposed up there."

Diddy and Dixie left Jenny's quartet behind and continued on their way. Upon arrival, they climbed as fast as they could, even climbing the railings of the ramp, even if Dixie also carried the rope and the pair of guns with her hair.

"We'll head to the lab," Diddy said as they were arriving. "I just hope those apes aren't looking for us."

Both finally entered the building again, and immediately headed to look for the herd of kong children. They wanted to think that all those children were still in good condition and that the apes had not begun to harm them with that heinous procedure.

"Hey, Diddy," Dixie said on the way before stopping, causing him to stop too. "D-do you know how these ones... are used?" she asked, showing him the pair of guns. "I recently tried to do it, but it didn't work."

"I think I remember something those four fools taught me, why?" Diddy asked, looking confused, before catching Dixie's idea. "Oh, no, no, Dixie! I mean... It's very dangerous to use them, did you know?"

"We're not going to use them," Dixie said. "I mean, yes... but just in case it's necessary... In case we already run out of alternatives."

"Uhh, yes, I know, but..." he said slowly, "Dixie, even if I dislike them and hate them... I don't think I can shoot those apes or those four stupid kids, I mean... I couldn't see with my eyes how-"

"I know, I understand, I know how ugly it feels to have done it. It happened to me with Jemky and I felt terrible," Dixie replied. "But... it was the only way I could get free from him that time, even if it was a crime. And I think now... even if it sounds bad... we could use them in case of an emergency."

Diddy looked at her for a few seconds unsurely, but then he took one of the guns and began to look at it and hold it in a firm position.

"W-Well, you just have to... pull back here," Diddy showed her, sliding the slide back a little. "And then you can shoot. You just have to hold it well. Maybe at that time you didn't activate it."

"Ah, it doesn't look that hard," Dixie said with a shrug. "Okay, so you keep one."

"Uhh, b-but, wait, Dixie... It's r-risky!" Diddy replied, getting a little worried.

"It'll be only in case of emergency, Diddy!" Dixie replied. "What's more, I hope I don't have to use them... But... if we have to use them, well... there is no other option. Otherwise, we'll never leave here."

"Oh... O-okay," Diddy stammered, still nervous about the idea. "Uh, but only one thing, Dixie. Seriously, this is very dangerous to use, so be careful where you aim, and if you shoot, hold it firmly with both hands, because it can wobble or deflect the shot."

The two kongs, now each with a gun in hand, continued down the stairs. Dixie, for her part, left the rope she was carrying on one of the railings. The two of them kept their weapons tightly held, and at the same time their hands trembled a little; Diddy had carried one when Jemky's quartet had taught him how to use it a long time ago, while Dixie didn't know how to use one, even though she had already used it against Jemky months earlier.

When they reached the second floor, they began to walk through the corridors again, looking very cautiously that none of their rivals were there. Suddenly, they began to hear a few quick footsteps near them that made them tense instantly, and they turned to look at who they were.

"Let's go this way," Diddy whispered to Dixie, taking her arm.

Both strayed and tried to hide until those footsteps were no longer heard nearby. They were in a corner of one of the corridors, when suddenly... Dixie felt someone touch her shoulder and instantly she turned and pointed the gun at it... Although it was only Jenny's quartet, who were shown with confused faces when they saw Dixie pointing at them.

"Hey! W-what are you doing here?!" Diddy asked them hurriedly. "I told you to stay outside! You can't follow us!"

"Go back outside! Those apes will catch you!" Dixie added in the same way.

"Stop there, monkeys!"

Diddy and Dixie froze when they heard a known voice right behind them and, knowing clearly who it was now, they turned and pointed guns at them while swallowing their nerves as they did so. Indeed, it was Jemky's quartet this time, who also had guns in hand and were pointing at them.

"Ah, you want to be in the same boat, huh?!" Jemky said in a mocking tone as he pointed at them.

"And what the heck are you doing with the Jennies?! *Tell us!*" Rocky ordered them, getting the gun closer to them, but Diddy and Dixie returned the same gesture with the ones they had. "*Why do the Jennies move on their own? What did you do to them?!*"

"*It's none of your business!*" Dixie exclaimed, pointing the gun at them and, in turn, trying to cover up for the other quartet.

"You've done something with them!" Mandrew replied, pointing at them as well. "Maybe that's what you were doing all along!"

Both sides stood firm with weapons in hand. Even though Diddy and Dixie's hands were shaking, they wanted to stay stable so they could face them. Suddenly, Jenny's quartet began trying to pounce on the other quartet, but Diddy and Dixie stopped them in time.

"*Keep still, please,*" Diddy whispered to Jenny's quartet.

"*What did you do to the Jennies?!*" Jemky shouted, pointing them closer. "*What did you do to them to get them moving on their own?!*"

"*It's none of your business!*" Diddy replied in the same posture, arming himself with courage more and more. "And where do you have the other kids?!"

"*It's none of your business either!*" Melenky replied.

Diddy and Dixie kept pointing at the evil kids and covering up for the mechanical kids at the same time. Even so, both deep down didn't know what actions to take at that moment as their hands trembled with the gun.

"*Put down your guns!*" Rocky ordered.

"*Put down yours!*" Dixie replied.

"You don't even know how to use them," Mandrew told them mockingly. "Just look at how your little hands tremble!"

Dixie looked at Jenny's quartet and nodded at them as if telling them to follow them and, likewise, did it to Diddy. Then, both were pulling the hands of the quartet and, taking courage to take risks, began to run down the perpendicular corridor that was, trying to take Jenny's quartet to follow them.

"*Hey, COME BACK!*" Rocky exclaimed.

Jemky's quartet set out to follow them as well, all running as fast as they could. On the way, they were launching a couple of shots in the air, which scared Diddy and Dixie, but the latter rushed to prepare their weapons as well and executed another couple of shots into the air... although their hands wobbled after doing so.

Diddy and Dixie went to hide in a corner between the corridors, taking Jenny's quartet with them; they were both quite fearful about them... Even if they didn't know if getting shot would really affect them.

"W-we have to go to the lab," Diddy said as he breathed heavily, making sure that the other four kids were not around. "Anyway, those four are not going to kill us if they want to take us alive to their dads."

"We have to hide the Jennies," Dixie added, looking at them. "They can get hurt if we walk around with them."

"Wait a minute, but they... What would happen to them if they were shot?" Diddy questioned with a look of strangeness. "I mean... They *are already*..."

"Well... Anyway, they can suffer some damage to their mechanism, right?"

"They went this way!" Jemky was heard exclaiming nearby.

Diddy and Dixie were on alert and held their guns firmly again, but they didn't know what to do with Jenny's quartet now.

"Listen," Diddy whispered to Jenny and company. "Please, for what you want most, *stay here*, please."

Jemky's quartet was getting closer and closer and it was obvious that they were going to find Diddy and Dixie when they passed where they were hiding, so they both had to get out anyway.

Diddy and Dixie, both gun-wielding and plucking their courage, came out in front of Jemky's quartet and pointed at them.

"*Very funny, aren't you, monkeys?*" Jemky said as they pointed at them too. "But you don't even know how to shoot well, you're not going to kill us."

"And neither will you," Diddy replied. "As dead, we won't be useful to your dads."

"Oh, really?" Mandrew exclaimed defiantly. "Well, we can kill you, hide your corpses and tell our dads that you just ran away! What's more, they're already thinking that you escaped!"

Diddy and Dixie, without answering anything else, began to take a few steps back faster and faster, but at the same time, the quartet of bully children was following them.

"No, no, you won't come out of here, monkeys!" Jemky ordered, pointing at them and pulling the slide of the gun. "*Stop or we'll have no mercy on you!*"

"*STOP, MONKEYS!*" Rocky insisted, pulling back the slide as well, ready to shoot.

Mandrew and Melenky also began to prepare their guns, which accelerated Diddy and Dixie's pulse, who thought about what actions to take in the face of this position of the quartet.

"If anything happens, you shoot them at their feet, Dixie," Diddy muttered, staring at Jemky and company.

Diddy and Dixie continued to walk backwards until they almost reached the perpendicular corridor, but in turn, the quartet kept following them, and then they could see how each of them placed his finger on the trigger.

"Stay still, monkeys! It's serious!" Jemky ordered them with a menacing look as he pointed at them. *"We said stay still, stupid monkeys!"*

"Stay still or we'll shoot!" Rocky continued threatening them, but Diddy and Dixie kept walking backwards, and even... they pulled the slide of their guns as well. *"STAY STILL, DARN IT! STILL!"*

Diddy and Dixie began to be overcome by nerves while their hands trembled continuously when holding the guns. Suddenly... Dixie couldn't hold back anymore and *pressed the trigger*, unleashing a single shot that left her hand shaking but caused the projectile to pass close to the quartet's legs.

"HEY, STUPID!" Mandrew shouted.

Immediately, the four began to press the triggers, but just before the shooting, Diddy and Dixie crouched down and began to flee at full speed until they reached the perpendicular corridor. Seconds later, the quartet pressed the triggers again, firing more shots... although these didn't reach Diddy and Dixie.

"But what the heck?!" Jemky exclaimed. *"GET AWAY! OR WE'LL SHOOT YOU TOO!"*

Diddy and Dixie quickly turned to look at who the quartet was speaking to... When suddenly, they realized that it was the *other quartet*, who came out as if nothing to confront them.

"HEY, NO, NO, NO, HIDE!" Diddy ordered them from a distance.

Those kids from Jenny's quartet lunged at Jemky and company, and began beating them as if they didn't care about danger at all.

"Hey, LET US... LET US!" Rocky yelled at the mechanical children as they tried to push them away.

"Stay still... STAY STILL, DARN IT!" Jemky added. *"WE CONTROLLED YOU! LET US!"*

Diddy and Dixie, arriving at the corner of the corridor, witnessed the scene while not knowing what action to take at that moment... If they shot, they could hurt Jenny's quartet as well.

"URGH, YOU DARN ROBOTS!" Mandrew exclaimed.

Jemky's quartet pointed guns at the other quartet, but the latter didn't seem to know that this posed a threat and didn't mind ignoring them. But suddenly... Mandrew managed to give Ricky a strong push and, without giving him a second of waiting, shot him directly, knocking him to the ground.

Diddy and Dixie were horrified and covered their eyes at the scene... but seconds later, they saw that Ricky got up as if nothing... and he didn't even have any wounds or injuries.

"W-what the heck?!" the bully kids exclaimed, all showing shock at that.

Then, Jenny's quartet pounced on them again. But seconds later, Jemky and company began to push them away with more force, and shot to knock them to the ground... Before long, Jenny's quartet got back up as if they had only been given a push.

"B-BUT WHAT THE HECK WITH THOSE FOUR KIDS!" Jemky exclaimed, shocked along with the group as they watched the other quartet in amazement.

Jemky and company shot the other quartet again and, as if they were now made of rubber, the latter got up and kept trying to lunge at them.

"NO, LEAVE US!" Rocky yelled at them as they were pushed away.

"Darn, what the heck did that pair of monkeys do to them?!" Mandrew added.

Diddy and Dixie were hidden behind the corner of the corridor. Both were trembling with fear about Jenny's quartet, but at the same time, they were also shocked and didn't know if it really represented a danger to the four of them to be shot, since it really didn't seem to affect them at all; they were as if were armored dolls to which a shot only knocked them to the ground and as if it were a simple push.

Jemky's quartet continued to shoot at them, but the other quartet kept throwing themselves at them without any consequences.

"Oh, to heck with these ones!" Jemky exclaimed, surrendering. *"We're going to run out of projectiles; let's go only for that pair of monkeys!"*

The quartet pushed the other four kids out of their way and continued running after Diddy and Dixie, to which these two ran away without thinking any longer, and even without being able to do anything for Jenny and company.

"W-what will we do with Jenny and the other kids?!" Dixie asked as she ran desperately along with Diddy.

"D-don't worry for now; at least we know they'll be fine!" Diddy added.

"STOP, MONKEYS!"

Jemky's quartet appeared in front of them, right in the corner of the next corridor where they were going to run. But immediately, Diddy pulled the slide of the gun and fired a shot forward in the air to scare them and, taking Dixie by the arm, managed to veer off the way along with her.

"DARNED!" Rocky exclaimed.

The four of them started firing shots into the air, trying to reach Diddy and Dixie, but these two had already strayed into another corridor.

"The laboratory was this way!" Diddy exclaimed as he ran.

Suddenly, as they turned into another corridor, they ran head-on into Jenny's quartet. Both pointed their guns at them thinking they were the other kids, but immediately put them down when they saw them well.

"Hey, go back outside, please!" Dixie told them desperately.

"No, no, no!" Diddy interrupted quickly. "Thinking about it, I think they can come with us, it won't happen nothing--"

"THERE THEY ARE!"

Diddy and Dixie turned and saw Jemky's quartet pointing at them and preparing their guns to shoot them, so they both went on alert again and prepared theirs. Meanwhile, those kids from Jenny's quartet only stayed in front of the two, looking towards the other quartet.

"Stop, pair of fools!" Jemky's quartet ordered the two of them, before speaking to the other four children. *"And you stay out of this, you dumb robot monkeys!"*

Jemky's quartet was heading towards Diddy and Dixie, but not before the other quartet got in their way, giving them both time to run in the opposite direction, even if they fired a few shots in vain at Jenny and company.

Diddy and Dixie managed to gain distance from Jemky's quartet, but they immediately began firing more shots in their direction, often being interrupted by Jenny's quartet.

"STEP ASIDE, MEDDLING MONKEYS!" Melenky exclaimed as they pushed the other quartet hard, even if they refused to obey.

"UGH, DARN IT WITH THESE MECHANICAL KIDS!" Mandrew shouted.

Diddy and Dixie detoured into another corridor, this time already being away from Jemky's quartet and close to the corridor where the laboratory would be. Both were going to turn, when suddenly, the quartet of armed thug kids appeared, pointing at them straight.

"You've had enough of us, stupid monkeys!" Jemky shouted threateningly.

Diddy and Dixie pointed their guns at them as well, taking a few steps in reverse and pulling back the slides to try to scare them away.

"Ah, getting too smart, aren't you?!" Rocky told them in a tone of irony, also pulling back the slide.

Suddenly, Jenny's quartet appeared by surprise behind the other quartet, causing a scare to the latter and making them drop a shot by accident that passed right between Diddy and Dixie.

"LET US NOW!" the four thug kids exclaimed as they were cornered and attacked by the other quartet.

Diddy and Dixie began to flee, but were immediately pursued by Jemky's quartet, who had given another push to Jenny and company before.

"STOP, PAIR OF FOOLS!"

Jemky's quartet, while they were chasing them, began to shoot uncontrollably towards the front, so Diddy and Dixie immediately ducked and even had to move in different directions to ensure that no projectile hit them. Both began to become extremely tense at the actions the quartet was taking; they were so tense that the survival instinct took hold of them, and they prepared their weapons to start firing at the quartet as well, even if their shots were quite deflected. Suddenly, Jenny's quartet were not far behind at that moment, and they got in the middle of the shooting in front of Diddy and Dixie, never mind that the projectiles fell on the four of them repeatedly.

"GET OUT OF HERE, ROBOT MONKEYS!" Rocky yelled at them, even if it was in vain.

"Bah! Forget it, nothing happens to these four!" Jemky interrupted. *"Our target is those two!"*

Diddy and Dixie, with their minds blank at the time and with the survival instinct controlling them, continued to aim at Jemky and company and fire a few shots, while the quartet tried to do the same, but the other quartet got in their way and made them deflect the shots.

"URGH, DARN IT WITH THESE FOUR NOSY KIDS!" Mandrew complained as they fired.

Even if it seemed a little cruel, Diddy and Dixie followed Jenny's quartet, shielding themselves with them so that the projectiles wouldn't reach them, while trying to shoot in the direction of the quartet of thug kids.

After a few more seconds of shooting, Diddy and Dixie managed to at least gain the advantage to be able to flee from that corridor and be able to detour to the next, the same one where the laboratory was.

"Quick, quick, quick, there it is!" Diddy exclaimed in extreme desperation as they made their way to the lab door.

Both managed to successfully reach the door and, without having time to think if it was safe, entered through it to the laboratory... Not before having a huge scare that almost paralyzes their pulse, at seeing the ones who met face to face... for the bad luck of the two of them.

"What?! THE MONKEYS!"

Diddy and Dixie, their hearts pounding, rushed to point their guns as they tried to retreat... but when they got out, they found Jemky's quartet pointing at them again and, at the same time, they had the group of *adult apes* intimidating them too with guns larger than those carried by both.

"So, you were trying to escape, weren't you, brat monkeys?!" one of the evil apes shouted at Diddy and Dixie.

"Ah, that's why we heard so many gunshots!" another ape added.

Dixie, breathing heavily along with Diddy and with thousands of feelings invading her at that moment, hurriedly pulled the slide and randomly pulled the trigger on both the quartet and the group of big apes... But unfortunately, no projectile was fired. Diddy, out of survival instinct, rushed to go along and fired his gun against both groups too... But it didn't work out for him either. Both of them went blank and just had an empty look.

"Ha! What a good move, monkeys!" Mandrew said sarcastically. *"But it seems that you ran out of projectiles."*

Immediately, the group of adult apes, still with guns in hand, grabbed them both by the arms roughly and began to drag them into the laboratory, while aiming at them so that they wouldn't escape. Then, they snatched their guns and put them both back in those shackled chairs, which wrapped them in their wrists, legs and torso.

"NO ONE ESCAPES HERE, PAIR OF BRATS!" the apes shouted at Diddy and Dixie, before slapping each of them as if they were scolding their sons.

Both Diddy and Dixie began to feel continuous internal blows as they had their pulse racing and felt their circulation to their feet clearly. Both felt an enormous frustration and despair that their whole plan went wrong, not only because they had been caught again by the group of criminal mandrills and orangutans, but also because, in that same room... there was *the herd of kidnapped kong children*... each of them trapped in those chairs without being able to do anything to get free... Just like the two of them...

Chapter 71: Latent Panic

Diddy and Dixie had their minds blank, while their pulsations were so fast that they couldn't think well at the moment. Both were trapped in those mechanical chairs, as were the rest of the kidnapped kong children, while they were with the evil ape group present.

"Oh, what a pity, monkeys," Mandrew said mockingly along with the other three kids. "But you didn't win."

Diddy and Dixie wanted to yell at them with all their might, but the presence of the adult ape group prevented them. Both, though knowing it was in vain, waved their feet in the air and tried to get their hands out of the shackles, earning only more burlesque laughter from Jemky's quartet.

"Oh, but what fools!" Melenky said, looking at them mockingly. "You can't get out of there!"

"Boys!" the apes exclaimed to the quartet, stopping their laughter instantly. "Come here! We're going to start with these kids."

The quartet went to the apes, while Diddy and Dixie became increasingly tense and waved their feet continuously at what they said.

The red-lapel mandrill was making adjustments to the device they called the *electric star scalpel*, to which he was attaching a new blade. Meanwhile, the black-lapel orangutan was preparing a few mixtures in containers, using the new *quartz* they had brought.

Diddy and Dixie, seeing that, only started shaking a lot more; both already knew for sure what those apes were about to do with those objects, since they remembered the instructions they had read in that book and how they would use them on all those kong children... And they could include the two of them too.

"How long does it take to mechanize a kid?" Melenky asked the apes.

"The entire procedure takes about two days," a mandrill replied as he cleaned other tools. "Mostly because they must be refrigerated for twenty-four hours. The other twenty-four hours before is where they'll be intervened. The hardest part is when we put the motion sensors in them; we have to make sure the kid doesn't move as much, otherwise something could go wrong."

"So... do you do that to them when they're still *alive*?"

"That's right; as dead they won't work anymore," the lead orangutan replied. "And when they stop moving, the rest of the mechanism is placed in them, and these mixtures are placed through their veins," he added, showing them a jar with one of the mixtures he was making. "It must be done quickly, before they're no longer useful. Finally, they'll be cured and will be like new, and then they'll go to refrigeration."

"Sounds easy," Mandrew said, looking pensively at the herd of kong children.

"Not so easy," the lead orangutan said. "At least with those four little brats that we already mechanized it was not, but we may now do it more easily. Every kid should be sedated first with

the hypnotizing mixture, so they'll stay still during the procedure and won't feel any pain, or rather: they'll no longer feel or notice anything."

"Wow, then it's a complex thing," Jemky said with his arms crossed. "And will you let us make one, right?"

"We'll teach you gradually," the lead orangutan replied. "We'll let the last children be done by you. *But only if you do it right and don't come out with some antics!*" he added, raising his voice in a warning tone and frightening them four a little. "And we'll let you do that *just* because we need them ready as *soon as possible*."

Diddy and Dixie only shuddered to hear the apes themselves all the steps they would make to the herd of kong children, and worse, that both would also be victims if they didn't leave that place soon... from which they could no longer get out, being both trapped in those shackled chairs too. Both were beginning to think that, even if it had been cruel and negligent, they would already be on Hurricane Island again if from the beginning only the two of them had escaped, leaving the rest of the kong children behind. Or worse, they were regretting not having accepted the help that the circus animals had recently offered them in terms of escape.

Suddenly, the group of apes headed to each child one by one and gave them small pushes or soft slaps as if they were examining them. Each of the kong children stood still and made no expression before the apes; they just looked at them without showing resistance or fear.

"They are all still in good condition," the blue-lapel mandrill said as he examined each child.

Finally, they did the same with Diddy and Dixie, who were afraid of the approach of the apes, and would be trembling much more if not for the shackles that held them.

"Only these two worry me," the mandrill said, looking at Diddy and Dixie. "They're not sedated and are conscious. We'll have to hold them well during the procedure, otherwise they'll be very difficult to intervene."

"Yeah, because *some little ones* wasted the hypnotizing mixture!" the brown-lapel mandrill exclaimed, looking sideways at Jemky and company.

"That was Melenky!" Mandrew replied, pointing at him.

"*Hey!*" Melenky exclaimed.

"Oh, and by the way," the lead orangutan said to the quartet. "Only about three or four children we don't have to mechanize yet; we'll leave them alive for some tests in the place where we'll send them."

"What tests?" Melenky asked them curiously.

"We can't explain that to you now," the other black-lapel orangutan replied. "But yes, about three of them still have to be left alive."

"Hey, and wait a minute, by the way!" the lead orangutan exclaimed, interrupting them all and heading towards Diddy and Dixie. Suddenly, he was re-adopting an expression of suspicion. "We *weren't* going to mechanize the pink-clothed chimpanzee yet. And now that I remember: she was in

the cells! By the way... *HOW DID THESE MONKEYS MANAGE TO ESCAPE?!*" he added by yelling at the quartet, making them tense immediately.

"And why are you looking at us?!" Jemky asked his father, looking at him strangely. "We did nothing there."

"I think I know what happened!" Rocky exclaimed, staring at Diddy and Dixie, before pointing at them. "Do you know what those two did?! They did something to the Jennies! I don't know what they did, but those mechanical kids now move on their own; they were behaving like their accomplices; those four kids must have helped them in some way!"

"*W-WHAT?!*" the lead orangutan exclaimed, beginning to be very furious. "*WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?!*"

"*Hey!*" Diddy exclaimed to the quartet. "*Don't lie, we didn't do anything!*"

"*Ah, no, rather, YOU don't lie now!*" Rocky replied. "*Recently, we all were with the four of them too!*"

"*Hey, wait, wait a minute!*" the lead orangutan interrupted. "*Could you explain what this is all about?!*"

"*Well, that!*" Mandrew replied. "These two monkeys have done something to make the Jennies move on their own! That's what they were doing recently!"

"*You are lying to us now!*" the blue-lapel mandrill replied. "Making those four kids move on their own is *another procedure!* A couple of little dumb monkeys couldn't do it right!"

"*We're telling you it's true!*" Rocky replied. "*What's more, if you want, we're going to look for those four kids right now; they mustn't have to be far from here!*"

"*But wait a minute!*" the lead orangutan interrupted before pausing. "First of all... *Who took the chimpanzee girl out of the cell?!*"

Melenky, Mandrew and Rocky started looking sideways at Jemky again, but Jemky tried to disguise not knowing anything.

"Ah, it was you, *Jemky*," the lead orangutan muttered before raising his voice. "*IT WAS YOU, IT IS OBVIOUS THAT IT WAS YOU!*"

"*No, no, I didn't!*" Jemky replied, shielding himself. "*I DIDN'T TAKE-*"

"*How much obsession do you have with that girl?!*" the orangutan exclaimed, taking and pushing him against the wall abruptly.

"*I SAID IT WASN'T ME!*" Jemky yelled at him, trying to defend himself. "*And we're telling you that those two monkeys did something to the Jennies! Those four kids must have set them free!*"

"*Even if that were true, those four ones wouldn't know how to free them, or how to unlock those chairs, or how to open those CELLS!*" the orangutan replied, holding Jemky.

"*BUT I DIDN'T DO IT!*"

"WHO FREED YOU FROM THE CELL, GIRL?!" the lead orangutan asked Dixie, turning to look at her.

"Jemky!" Dixie replied instantly.

"HEY! Don't lie!" Jemky replied.

"WELL, YES! It was you!" Dixie said, reviving her thirst for revenge on him. "And this time it is true! *You took me out of there because you wanted me to give you a chance!*"

"Hey, I DIDN'T TELL YOU THAT!" Jemky shouted. *"STOP BEING A LIE-"*

"THIS IS MORE THAN CLEAR!" the lead orangutan interrupted, giving Jemky a couple of strong slaps, before grabbing his arm and starting to drag him. *"As always: JEMKY!"*

"NO, NO, WAIT, DAD, WAIT!" Jemky shouted, resisting him. *"LET ME EXPLAIN-"*

"And take the chimpanzee girl back to the cells!" the lead orangutan ordered the other apes.

The lead orangutan was dragging Jemky back to the same countertop as the previous time, while the rest of the apes headed towards Dixie and began to unlock her chair to take her.

"NO, NO, WAIT!" Dixie exclaimed, screaming in despair. *"DON'T TAKE ME BACK!"*

"NO, LEAVE HER, PLEASE!" Diddy exclaimed, waving his feet, even if he knew he couldn't do anything at the moment. *"LET HER GO, EVIL APES-"*

"SILENCE, PAIR OF BRATS!" the brown-lapel mandrill shouted, slapping each of both.

Dixie began to scream much more and even tried to resist the apes, but they held her tighter limbs and hair.

On the other hand, the lead orangutan abruptly got Jemky up on the countertop, took one of the whips and began to prepare it for whipping him.

"Wait, wait, wait, Dad, STOP! WAIT A MOMEN-" Jemky pleaded, covering his arms, when his father was already whipping him continuously and making him scream with each blow. *"OKAY, YES, IT WAS ME, IT WAS ME! I FREED DIXIE!"*

Jemky took the whip to stop him, while the lead orangutan kept staring at him furiously.

"Yeah, okay, I released Dixie!" Jemky admitted. "And I'm going to be honest! I took her out of the cell, told her to give me a chance, and even told her I would help her escape from here if she agreed to go on a date with me! And I was really going to help her escape!"

The lead orangutan looked at him strangely. Even the rest of the apes, while carrying Dixie, stopped to look at him in the same way upon hearing too much sincerity.

"And that's it! That's the truth!" Jemky said with a shrug. "And you know what else is true? I have something else to say about Dix-"

"Well, anyway, it was you who freed her!" the lead orangutan interrupted, reparing the whip, before continuing to whip him mercilessly. *"SO, BRACE YOURSELF FOR THE CONSEQ-"*

"DIXIE WAS THE ONE WHO SHOT ME ON DK ISLAND!" Jemky exclaimed, leaving the apes more confused, while he was overwhelmed by the lashes received.

"WHAT?!" the apes exclaimed.

"YES, IT WAS HER! SHE-"

"SHUT UP!" Dixie added immediately, earning shocked glances from the apes. "Uhh, no, no... *THAT'S NOT TRUE! WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT NOW, JEMKY?!"* she added, trying to fix the matter.

"YEAH, IT WAS YOU, DIXIE!" Jemky replied, pointing to her, before speaking to his father. *"She was the one who shot me, Dad! She almost killed me and bled me dry!"*

The lead orangutan lowered the whip and kept looking at him strangely, but then, he also looked at Dixie suspiciously before heading towards her, with a whole firm attitude and looking at her threateningly.

"Is that true, girl?!" the lead orangutan asked him with a threatening tone. *"Did you try to kill Jemky?!"*

"NO, NO, NO! T-that's not true!" Dixie replied, trying to sound honest. *"I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING TO HIM!"*

"Oh, no, no, you can't lie now!" Jemky stressed. *"You shot me at the edge of that cliff and made me fall into the river! You just rat yourself out!"*

"I WITHDRAW WHAT I SAID!" the lead orangutan interrupted before pausing. *"BRING THE CHIMPANZEE BACK!* We'll mechanize her right now too! We'll look for her little siblings on our own! Anyway... we know they're on DK Island."

"W-what?! NO, NO, NO!" Dixie shouted. *"I WON'T LET YOU DO IT!"* she added even if she knew she couldn't do anything.

Dixie shuddered and felt her whole pulse rise to her chest and low to her feet abruptly, that she didn't know what was worse: if she was taken to the cells, she would never see Diddy again and she would have to hand her family over; or if they left her in the lab and she saw how they did that atrocious mechanization to everyone, including Diddy and herself... and then those apes would go to DK Island to look for the kongs there.

The apes put Dixie back in the chair and reactivated her shackles, including one in her hair. Then the lead orangutan grabbed her by the neck with his hands and spoke to her in a warning tone.

"Stupid brat! I don't kill you just because you will also serve us for the herd of mechanized children! Because otherwise, I WOULD MAKE YOU MONKEY PUREE MYSELF FOR TRYING TO KILL JEMKY!" he replied before releasing her.

Dixie, breathing heavily like never before, wanted to respond defensively, but she knew that would be of no use and it would even be a little less bad if they left her in that chair, instead of being taken to the cells... even if the apes would be about to finish them all off.

"Okay! Let's start fast then with all these brats!" the lead orangutan exclaimed. "Enough of the dramas!"

"Are you... not going to continue beating me?" Jemky asked his father with a forced smile.

"We're going to waste any more time if I do it now," the orangutan replied, looking at him seriously, before grabbing him and twisting his ear. "Anyway, don't think it'll stay that way either! You'll owe me one more beating, *you devil boy!*"

The apes headed towards the countertops where they had left the objects they would use, and the quartet followed them.

On the other hand, Diddy and Dixie were still trembling and breathing heavily. Dixie even began to fill her eyes with tears and make small sobs, to which Diddy stretched out his hand as little as he could and took hers, even if he barely reached her fingers. Both looked at each other with anguish without knowing or having anything to do; even if they could get out of there at that time, it would be difficult for them to get the herd of kong children out now. Each of the two remembered DK Island: Diddy thought only of Donkey, while Dixie thought only of Tiny, Kiddy and Chunky; both wondered when they would see them again... or even wondered if they would see them again.

"Now pay attention!" the lead orangutan exclaimed to the quartet, as he turned on the scalpel apparatus. "We'll first take blood and skin samples from these kids with this scalpel and put them in these containers," he added, showing them a small test tube.

"*Everyone's* blood and skin in that little thing?" Melenky asked strangely.

"No, it's every sample in each of these containers. This is just to first see what blood type and components they have, and thus apply the right quartz to them."

The lead orangutan took the scalpel, which was connected to the device by an extensive cable, and walked with it to one of the kidnapped kong children. Meanwhile, the other orangutan in that group carried a box with all the test tubes, and stood next to the lead orangutan. Then, the brown-lapel mandrill pressed a button behind the chair, causing the shackle holding the kong boy's hand to unlock.

"Now take a good look at how it's done," the lead orangutan said, holding the kong boy's hand with one hand, and holding the scalpel with the other. "You're going to make a circular and superficial cut, as perfect as you can, on their thumb. Terry, light the scalpel, please!"

The red-lapel mandrill turned on the device. Then, the lead orangutan pressed the blade of the scalpel against the thumb of the kong boy and a small spark and noise began to emit as it made contact with him. The orangutan made an almost perfect circular cut on the skin surface of the finger of the kong child, and the interesting fact about that is that that child still didn't put up resistance... He only made slight gestures of annoyance, but without objecting.

"Alright," the lead orangutan said, looking up as he took the small sample and placed it in one of the test tubes.

"That looks easy," Rocky said with a shrug.

"Not so much; you have to be careful with precision," the brown-lapel mandrill replied.

"Well, now with the next kid," the lead orangutan said.

Then, the apes began to do the same with the following kong children, who, like the first child, didn't resist the apes and only emitted light squeals and gestures of annoyance, as if they were only giving them a pinch.

Diddy and Dixie, from their positions, were horrified by the actions of the apes, and that would be only the beginning of all the aberrant procedure that they would do to everyone. As the apes collected samples from each of the children, they both felt enormous internal tension and waved their feet in the air harder, even if they knew they couldn't get free from those chairs.

"Now you guys try," the lead orangutan told the quartet. "One by one!"

The lead orangutan gave the scalpel to the four of them, with Mandrew being the first to take it. Then, he took the hand of one of the children and pressed the scalpel on his finger, wobbling a little at first but slowly maintaining the posture.

"Carefully, Mandrew," the blue-lapel mandrill said.

Seconds later, Mandrew had managed to extract the small sample from the finger of the kong boy, and placed it in one of the test tubes held by the black-lapel orangutan.

"Now I want to!" Melenky said hurriedly.

"No, no, I want to!" Jemky replied, intruding along with Rocky.

"*One by one!*" the lead orangutan exclaimed, raising his voice. "Rocky is next."

Each of the kids in the quartet was now attempting to do the same, with the help of the ape group.

They intervened in a few kong children, until later... it was Diddy and Dixie's turn. Both looked frightened towards the group of apes and the quartet, while their palpitations burst strongly inside.

"These two have to be held tightly," the brown-lapel mandrill said. "They're not sedated."

Diddy and Dixie kept waving their feet in the air and trying to get out of those chairs, while having all the apes in front of them.

"Hey!" Dixie called them before stuttering, but took courage to ask them. "W-why... d-do you w-want to do all this? W-what will you do with all these kids once they become mechanicals?!"

The group of apes looked at her seriously as if they saw a helpless creature, and then looked away.

"It's none of your business, little girl," the lead orangutan replied.

"Hey, yeah, what are you going to do with these kids after all?" Melenky asked them curiously.

"It's none of your business either," the red-lapel mandrill replied. "We only... have to take them somewhere else."

The brown-lapel mandrill unlocked the shackle that held one of Diddy's hands, to which he tried to make a maneuver with it, but the red-lapel mandrill stopped it instantly.

"It's my turn!" Jemky exclaimed, looking sideways and evil at Diddy.

Jemky was the one who took the scalpel this time and tried to take Diddy's hand.

"No... no, NO!" Diddy exclaimed in extreme desperation, trying to push his hand away. *"Please no! PLEASE NO! NOOO-"*

"Stay still, monkey!" the blue-lapel mandrill shouted, slapping him in the face.

"Stay still, you dumb monkey!" Jemky ordered him, holding his hand tighter as he prepared the scalpel. *"Now I'll really settle scores with you,"* he added, whispering in a malicious tone.

Diddy had palpitations faster than ever as he tried to resist them and began to scream, so the apes began to hold him by the limbs more tightly and closed his snout with one hand, while the quartet held his free arm. Dixie, on the other hand, could only watch the scene with extreme horror, unable to do anything about it for Diddy.

Then, with all the apes holding Diddy, Jemky gave him an evil smile and began pressing the scalpel against his finger, which made him shudder and scream in pain, even if the apes kept his snout closed.

Suddenly, Jemky stopped when sounds were heard that seemed to come from the door... The whole group of adult apes and the quartet turned to look at it when they heard and saw clearly that someone was manipulating the knob.

"What the?!" the lead orangutan exclaimed, watching strangely along with the rest ones, who were confused too by what they saw.

"W-who's there?!" one of the mandrills exclaimed.

Suddenly, Diddy and Dixie had an idea about *who* might be outside... Although they didn't know if that would mean something good or worse for the situation. Diddy, for his part, still felt the pain in his finger, although at least the cut didn't reach to be complete or deep.

Then, the lead orangutan went to open the door, turned the knob and... instantly, about four more kong children rushed in as if nothing... Indeed, it was *Jenny's quartet*, who headed straight for Diddy and Dixie as if they were greeting them.

"B-but what the heck?!" the apes exclaimed, all shocked at what they saw.

"The Jennies!" Jemky exclaimed with the other three kids. *"L-look! Did you see them?! They move by themselves! Those two monkeys did something to them!"* he added, pointing to Diddy and Dixie.

Diddy and Dixie panicked at the presence of that quartet, as they knew things could end worse now that they were in sight of the apes.

"No, no, no! Get out of here!" Diddy whispered to them hurriedly and tried to pretend to be surprised at their presence.

"BUT HOW?!" the lead orangutan exclaimed. *"WHAT THE HECK?! WHAT THE HECK IS GOING ON HERE?!"*

The kids from Jenny's quartet began to rummage the laboratory and even began to climb the countertops and shelves like little preschool children, which began to scandalize the group of apes.

"NO, NO, DARN IT, WHAT IS ALL THIS?!" one of the mandrills exclaimed in despair.

"GRAB THOSE BRATS!" the lead orangutan ordered.

The apes immediately went to try to catch up with Jenny's quartet, but they ran away while laughing as if they were playing.

"COME HERE, LITTLE BRATS!" the apes exclaimed as they ran. *"WHAT THE HECK HAVE THEY DONE TO THEM?!"*

Suddenly, Jenny's quartet, while running, also climbed and swayed through the doors of the shelves and even dropped certain devices and other objects from the laboratory, making the apes much angrier. The kids from Jemky's quartet also joined the chase, who by their agility, sometimes managed to catch the Jenny's, but they returned some defensive attacks.

Meanwhile, Diddy and Dixie didn't know what to do, and were just tense and without knowing what might happen next. The only thing missing was for Mr. Pinky to appear, of whom they knew nothing about his whereabouts, by the way.

"Ahh, I understand, I UNDERSTAND!" the lead orangutan exclaimed, pausing for a few seconds and then continuing the chase. *"Someone did the procedure of reviving them, WHO WAS IT?!"*

"THAT WAS THOSE TWO DUMB MONKEYS!" Jemky exclaimed as he ran too.

The chase continued while Jenny's quartet, in addition to running, were also destroying the laboratory. Between times, the apes managed to catch some of them, but they put up enough resistance and even attacked them savagely and managed to untie themselves from the apes, as if there were no consequences.

"URGH, THESE DARN BRATS!" the apes exclaimed, extremely furious.

Suddenly, as they continued to run and climb the shelves, Jenny's quartet found the apes' weapons and, without taking any precautions, Ricky took one and began to look at it curiously.

"NO, NO, DROP THAT, KID!" one of the mandrills ordered, heading towards Ricky. *"DON'T PLAY WITH IT!"*

Ricky, before the mandrill caught him, began to flee with the gun in hand and, as he ran, he continued to watch it until he slid the slide and began to press the trigger in a curious way, releasing a shot that scared him at first but then seemed to encourage him to release a couple more shots.

"NO, DARN, STAY STILL, KID! STAY STILL!" the apes ordered him, crouching down and stopping instantly.

Suddenly, Ricky started firing more shots into the air while smiling as if he were playing. And, as if that were not enough, Jenny, Mandy and Melvyn took a gun each too and tried to make the same movements as Ricky, although the shots didn't come out. Then, the apes came out to try to stop them, but Ricky scared them away with a gunshot.

"STAY STILL, YOU BRAT BOY!" the black-lapeled orangutan ordered as he headed straight toward him. *"STAY STILL! PUT DOWN THE GU-"*

Suddenly, Ricky fired a direct shot at the orangutan and knocked it to the ground, which immediately alarmed *everyone* present.

"NOOO, DARN IT, KID!" the leader orangutan shouted, terrified and trying to head towards Ricky. *"DROP THE GUN! DROP-"*

Ricky fired a shot toward the lead orangutan too, but he managed to duck in time. Then, Jenny, Mandy and Melvyn started dropping random shots with their guns too, putting everyone on alert.

"OH, SHOT!" the lead orangutan exclaimed, crouching down. *"TO THE GROUND! EVERYONE TO THE GROUND! BOYS, TO THE GROUND TOO!"* he ordered Jemky's quartet and the other apes.

"NO! HEY, STOP!" Diddy exclaimed along with Dixie to Jenny's quartet, although they didn't listen to them.

Jenny's quartet started a shootout inside the laboratory and seemed to take it as a game, even shooting each other, where they lay on the ground with the impacts, but immediately got back up. Meanwhile, the evil apes and the other quartet all remained on the floor, crawling behind or next to the countertops to take refuge. The only one who was not taking refuge was the black-lapel orangutan, who was badly wounded on the ground after being shot by Ricky. And finally, Diddy and Dixie were more frightened than ever as they watched the projectiles cross the air, and feared being hit by them or hitting the other kong children.

"STOP, PLEASE!" Dixie ordered the mechanical children, shouting in terror.

"DROP THOSE GUNS!" added Diddy in the same way. *"JENNY! MANDY! RICKY! MELVYN! STOP!"*

"STOP SHOOTING!"

Seconds later, Jenny's quartet began to "play" in front of where Diddy and Dixie were; between the four of them they shot continuously and seemed to be having fun about it.

"STOP AT ONCE, PLEASE!" Diddy ordered.

Suddenly, Jenny pointed her gun at Diddy and Dixie in a game way, but scaring them both away instantly.

"NO, NO, JENNY, NOOO! STOP, STOP!" Diddy shouted in extreme desperation.

"PUT THE GUN AWAY, PUT THE GUN AWAY!" Dixie added in the same way before seeing that the other three kids began to point at them too. *"NO, NO, NO! SHOOT UPWARDS! SHOOT UPWARDS!"*

Jenny and company changed into confused expressions, but little by little they began to change direction to the guns and released a few shots upwards, and then continued the shooting, but this time vertically.

"WAIT A MOMENT!" the lead orangutan exclaimed from the floor. *"HOW COME THEY LISTEN TO THOSE TWO MONKEYS?!"*

"Well, because they must have trained them as they pleased!" Rocky replied on the floor as well.

"NO, DARN IT!" one of the mandrills exclaimed. *"AND THEY DIDN'T EVEN REVIVE THEM WELL, BECAUSE THEY DON'T SPEAK!"*

Jenny's quartet continued to shoot upwards while still showing themselves as if they were having fun... Suddenly, Diddy thought of an alternative, which he didn't know if it would be risky, but it was the only thing he could do.

"Jenny! Come here!" Diddy called her, looking sideways at the apes and the other quartet as well. *"Come, Jenny! Uhh... don't you want to give me a hug?!"* he added, smiling forcefully.

In the middle of the shooting, Jenny stopped the shooting instantly, and ran straight to Diddy to throw herself to hug him with excitement.

"Uhh... Yeah, yeah, okay, I love you too," he said, keeping his smile forced and trying to dodge her, before whispering to her. *"Now get me out of here, please, if you really love me, press the buttons behind this chair, press them!"*

Jenny looked at him strangely for a few seconds, but then acceded to Diddy's command and went to deactivate the shackles on his chair, whereupon he was able to stand up immediately and did the same with Dixie's chair to free her.

"WHAT THE HECK!" the lead orangutan exclaimed as he realized it. *"NO, THE MONKEYS! THEY RUN AWAY! THAT BRAT GIRL SET THEM FREE!"*

"LET'S NOT LET THEM GO! CATCH THEM!" one of the mandrills added, trying to stand up.

Diddy and Dixie thought about what actions to take now, and headed to stop Jenny's quartet, trying to take away their guns... When suddenly, they heard other shots different from those of the quartet and, when they turned to look, they saw the apes with weapons in hand standing up again and pointing at them. Both immediately ducked when those apes started shooting, and tried to move to some "safe point".

"Let's get out of here, Dixie!" Diddy whispered desperately.

"NOW WE WILL KILL YOU BOTH!" the apes shouted, heading towards them.

Diddy and Dixie headed as fast as they could towards the laboratory door and got out of there, managing to dodge a few projectiles from the group of apes. The latter went out to chase them both, except for the leader orangutan, who stayed to help the other orangutan who had been wounded by Ricky.

"Will! Will! Are you still alive?!" the lead orangutan asked the other orangutan, shaking him desperately.

"Uh... I-I think... I am... but... not by much," stammered the wounded orangutan on the floor.

"I'll give you the healing mixture, keep calm," the lead orangutan said, before staring sternly at the door. *"But that pair of brat monkeys... we have to finish them right now, we have no choice,"* he

added firmly and clenching his fist. Then, he headed Jemky's quartet, who were standing up. "Boys!... I think a little help from you wouldn't hurt this time."

The lead orangutan went to one of the shelves, from where he took out a large jar with a greenish liquid, which he showed to Jemky and company.

"You all drink this!" the lead orangutan ordered the four children.

"And what is this?" Jemky asked with a look of surprise.

"Just drink it!" the lead orangutan replied. "It'll help you to fight with that pair of brats!"

Meanwhile, in the middle of the corridors, Diddy and Dixie were running again, this time with greater speed and with the survival instinct through the roof. But they no longer knew what to do now; they only cared about being able to save themselves at that moment, while they had the three mandrill apes looking for them and chasing them at gunpoint.

After a while, Diddy and Dixie managed to get lost from the sight of the apes, and began to head towards the main staircase room to climb as fast as they could and be able to hide better. Both stopped in the corridor on the top floor while thinking quickly about what to do and breathing heavily.

"D-Dixie..." Diddy said in a trembling voice. "I-I think there is no other way... We n-need those g-guns again... Is t-the only alternative if we want to get out of here."

Dixie, with thousands of bad memories but holding strong at the same time, nodded, being very determined at what Diddy said.

"E-even... to those four bully kids t-too," Dixie stammered as she continued to breathe heavily.

They both headed towards the stairs again, but had to hide instantly because they spotted the three mandrills in the corridor on the second floor looking up. Then, the mandrills started climbing the stairs at speed, making them both panic... Until Diddy remembered what action they could take in that case.

"Dixie... Let's jump down from here," he said hurriedly. "Use your hair!"

Dixie nodded again and went with Diddy to a corner of the stair balcony and, making sure the apes didn't have them in sight, they climbed up to the edge of the railings. Dixie grabbed Diddy, and then the two dove down until they reached the second floor, where Dixie landed with her hair.

Then, both immediately fled from there, and headed towards the laboratory, hoping to have no complications along the way.

"*Watch out!*" Diddy whispered, stopping Dixie when, at the end of the corridor, there was Jemky's quartet and the two adult orangutans running in a perpendicular direction... Surprisingly, the orangutan that had been shot was also running alongside that group as if nothing had happened to him.

Diddy and Dixie waited a few more seconds, before continuing on their way. Later, they arrived at the laboratory and immediately went to search the shelves where Jenny's quartet had recently taken out their guns; both hoped to find a pair that would serve them for the situation. Fortunately, there

were a few weapons stored on those shelves, which didn't hesitate to take them and check them quickly so that they were loaded.

"Well, I think they're loaded enough that we can use them," Diddy said, closing the slide. "We should just try not to waste them... Oh, I really wouldn't want to do this, but..."

"I know... neither did I..." Dixie added in the same way. "But I think there is no other way..."

They both stood up with guns in hand again and immediately left the laboratory. Of course, the herd of kong children was still in there, all tied up in those shackled chairs and unable to get out, but Diddy and Dixie knew that it would be too risky to take them adrift now, much more so if that group of evil apes were already getting fed up with the two of them. And on the other hand, Jenny's quartet were not present there, but Diddy and Dixie could not care about them at that time... Or at least they hoped the apes hadn't locked them up or something to stop them. Now, both Diddy and Dixie, had to go out to face the situation they were in, even with all the fear they would have...

Chapter 72: Unforeseen Arrivals

The two little kongs moved through the corridors, both more nervous than ever and with their hands shaking as they carried their weapons... Even if they were determined about what they should do toward the apes, they still felt some remorse beforehand. But at the same time, they knew that doing that would be their last alternative if they really wanted to get out of that place and rescue all the kidnapped kongs.

Suddenly, around a corner of a corridor, they found four known silhouettes. Instantly, Diddy and Dixie prepared their guns and pointed them at them, but then put them down when they saw that it was Jenny's quartet, who smiled at them and made gestures of greeting as if nothing happened. They were both relieved, even a little, that they were okay.

"Hey... Uh, you have to leave us a moment," Diddy told the four kids, looking around. "We have something risky to do. Go to hide or something."

"Don't get caught by those apes," Dixie added in the same way.

Suddenly, they began to hear repetitive footsteps and known voices nearby, which put them on alert instantly.

"It must be them, it must be them!" Diddy exclaimed quietly, looking at where those footsteps were coming from.

"Let's hide, quick!" Dixie said in the same way and started walking along with Diddy. "And you guys, try to hide!" she told Jenny's quartet before walking away from them again.

Diddy and Dixie turned into another corridor and hid in a corner, from where they watched if the apes and Jemky's quartet would be nearby... And, indeed, it was like this: the nine of them were together walking down that corridor, all with a gun in hand like a band of young and old ones. Diddy and Dixie immediately went into hiding again as they both looked at each other with hesitant expressions, and began to tremble much more.

"You're ready, aren't you?" Diddy asked Dixie insecurely.

"I-I guess..." she replied before looking at her gun.

They both took heavy sighs and began to pull the slides back. Then, they peeked lightly out of the corner of the corridor and pointed their guns, trying to focus on the entire band of apes. The hands of both trembled so much that they could not even aim well, in addition, they thought that they had to execute fast, continuous and accurate shots if they also wanted to get out alive, which made them more nervous.

"On the count of three..." Diddy whispered, pointing the gun with his hand trembling. "One..."

"T-two..." Dixie continued before her hand began to shake more intensely. "N-no... No!"

Dixie lowered the gun all at once, and Diddy did the same instantly, then hid again in the corner of the corridor. Both looked at each other with frustration and indecision at the same time.

"No, no, no, I can't do it," Dixie said, breathing heavily. "I mean... I want to but I can't. It scares me."

"I... neither do I," Diddy added, trembling completely. "H-how about we do it, but we don't do it right and... those apes start shooting at us with everything?"

"B-but anyway... we have to do it!" Dixie exclaimed, trying to regain her posture.

Both raised their weapons again and placed their hands in firing position... When suddenly, Diddy accidentally dropped one shot to the front, causing a stunned noise.

"What?! THEY'RE OVER THERE!" one of the apes was heard saying in the distance.

Diddy and Dixie became alert and began fleeing that corridor immediately. They ran as fast as their limbs gave them and wanted to make sure they reached the next corridor before the band of apes managed to spot them... Unfortunately... that was what happened.

"STOP, PAIR OF BRATS!" the lead orangutan shouted in the distance.

Immediately, the band of apes, including Jemky's quartet, began shooting in the direction of Diddy and Dixie, but luckily, these two had managed to duck in time and make a sliding movement when turning to the other corridor. Then, both continued to run in terror.

"URGH, YOU DARN MONKEYS!" the apes exclaimed before they began to chase them.

Diddy and Dixie paused for a while in a corner of one of the corridors, while still shivering in fear and watching around where they could go. After a minute, both came out stealthily, holding the weapons firmly. They walked the corridors again, looking everywhere that the apes or the quartet did not appear to them by surprise. Even if they were hesitant to do what they should do, they knew it was either that or take more risk of the apes finishing them both off.

Both were coming to the corner of a corridor, so they had to be very cautious when turning... But as soon as they got to look, they were presented head-on by the group of apes with the quartet together, who immediately aimed at them.

"Now you'll see, you pair of dumb kids!" the apes said as they pulled the slides.

Diddy and Dixie instantly reared their guns as well and pointed it at them. By instinct of survival, both finally began to release shots, scaring the entire band of apes, but unfortunately, their hands wobbled so much in each shot and it was difficult for them to hit them. This action only angered the apes more and they began to get into position to shoot, so Diddy and Dixie retreated instantly, making it difficult for the apes to shoot.

"YOU DARN BRATS!" the apes shouted loudly.

Diddy and Dixie ran all over the corridor with all the adrenaline alive inside them, while the apes and the quartet fired multiple shots trying to reach them both, but they diverted continuously as they ran. Fortunately, both managed to turn towards the perpendicular corridor and were relieved for a few seconds that no projectile had hit them.

"Let's go this way!" Dixie said, pointing to another corridor a short distance from where they were.

The two entered that other corridor and stayed hidden for a few seconds. But for safety, they decided to go a little further until they reached almost the end of that corridor. They prepared the guns also in case it was necessary and watched cautiously everywhere.

Suddenly, at the beginning of that corridor, Jemky's quartet appeared and they instantly noticed both.

"Here they are, you pair of dumbs!" Jemky exclaimed in the distance.

Diddy and Dixie pulled the slides instantly and started firing shots into the distance, even if they didn't aim well at the quartet. The four of them were also not far behind and started shooting continuously, so Diddy and Dixie had to take steps back and crouch down several times. Both were having difficulty continuing to focus on shooting, so they ran to the next corridor and ran away from the scene.

"Ugh, shooting seemed so easy!" Dixie exclaimed in frustration as they ran.

Both were going to turn to another corridor, when suddenly, the lead orangutan appeared to them by surprise and scared them away.

"Now you won't escape, little brats!" the orangutan exclaimed, pointing at them, ready to shoot.

Dixie, acting instantly with survival instinct, also rushed to activate her gun, and shot the lead orangutan a couple of times, *directly* to the chest, knocking him to the ground and leaving him motionless... After so much, Dixie had taken a step in daring to do it... She froze, and began to breathe harder than ever as she felt her pulse go down to her feet and several memories invaded her mind at that moment, being the strongest: that tragic episode when she and her family tried to flee from that group of apes.

Diddy, meanwhile, was shaking and breathing hard too when he saw Dixie's action. For a moment, he had gone blank as he tried to calm down. Then, both looked at each other uncertainly, and then looked at the lead orangutan *motionless* on the floor; the thought of having to do the same with the rest of the apes, and even with the quartet of bully kids, turned their stomachs, but they tried to see it as a unique possibility that their entire escape and rescue plan would work out. With nothing else to do at that moment, both turned and continued on their way, now having to find the rest of the apes.

"Di-Diddy..." Dixie stammered with a look of remorse as they walked.

"Uh... T-that's what... w-we had to do, didn't we, Dixie?" Diddy replied in kind, before looking again at the orangutan lying on the floor. "Wait, wait! One minute!"

"What?!" Dixie exclaimed, turning to look at the orangutan as well.

They both gasped and started shaking again when suddenly... they were watching the lead orangutan get up and, as if that were not enough, *there was no trace of gunfire or visible wounds or injuries on him.*

"Oh, no, no, no! Let's run!" Diddy exclaimed, panicking when he saw the orangutan pointing at them again as if nothing had happened.

"HA! Did you believe it, didn't you, pair of brats?!" the orangutan exclaimed, pointing the gun at them again.

Diddy and Dixie didn't know what was happening at that moment, so they just ran away from there and, just like a few moments ago, moved in different directions to deflect the shots from the lead orangutan.

"W-why did he get up?!" Diddy exclaimed in despair as they ran.

"I have no idea!" Dixie replied in kind.

They reached the corner of the corridor and hid in the next one. They were going to keep running, but then Diddy suddenly stopped and started pulling the slide of the gun.

"W-what's going on?!" Dixie asked, pausing later.

Diddy turned and peeked out of the previous corridor again. The lead orangutan was nearby, so Diddy immediately pointed the gun at him and shot him, knocking him back to the ground.

Dixie tensed for a few seconds, but then headed towards Diddy, and they both went to examine the orangutan quickly. They bent down to look right in the chest area where Diddy had shot him, and what they saw left them surprised: the orangutan had the projectile trapped in his skin, with only a little blood around, but not exactly what a normal projectile wound should look like... What they saw next left them more shocked: the projectile was beginning to be ejected, and the wound was closing, something similar to when Dixie had her arm wound healed because of the carnivorous plant.

"W-what the...?!" Diddy exclaimed, completely confused.

"M-maybe they have drunk some of their weird elixirs," Dixie surmised.

Suddenly, the orangutan began to open his eyes little by little, so Diddy and Dixie immediately got up and began to take steps backwards until they started running... But they stopped in their tracks when, at the end of the corridor, the red-lapel mandrill appeared and aimed at them as soon as he noticed them.

"Stop there, you brat kids!" the mandrill ordered them, pointing at them.

Immediately, Dixie opened fire without thinking so much and shot the mandrill, knocking it down in one fell swoop. Along with Diddy, they stared at the scene for a few seconds while breathing heavily. Then, both little kongs continued to run, until Diddy stopped in his tracks.

"Watch out, Dixie!" he exclaimed as he prepared his weapon in the opposite direction when he saw that the lead orangutan had gotten up and was pointing at them.

Diddy fired another shot at the orangutan, this time without thinking at all. Then, both continued to flee down the corridor while holding their weapons and now ready to face any ape that came their way.

"STAY STILL, YOU FOOLS!" the brown-lapel mandrill appeared pointing at them along with the blue-lapel one and the black-lapel orangutan.

Diddy and Dixie prepared their guns immediately and started firing repeatedly, but when they did so too hastily, they could not hit the apes, who then started shooting as well, so Diddy and Dixie had to duck instantly and try to deflect the shots.

"Darn this pair of brat kids!" the mandril in blue complained, stomping.

Suddenly, at a time when Diddy had the opportunity, he executed a shot towards the orangutan in black, managing to hit him right in the head and knocking him down instantly. Seconds later, Dixie managed to do the same with the mandrill in blue, who she shot straight to the chest, causing him to fall to the ground as well.

"DARN MONKEYS!" the brown-lapel mandrill yelled at them before preparing his gun to shoot them. *"But you can't kill us, do you kn-"*

Dixie managed to get ahead earlier and shoot the last mandrill in the head, knocking him to the ground.

"Let's leave quickly!" Diddy exclaimed immediately.

Both, without staying this time observing the motionless bodies of the apes, fled the scene... not before a shot scared them suddenly. They turned to look back and saw the red-lapel mandrill again standing and pointing at them.

"You never will leave here, darn you!" the mandrill yelled at them before firing again.

Diddy and Dixie moved fast again and in various directions to prevent the mandrill from hitting them. The mandrill was firing so consecutively, that Diddy and Dixie couldn't stop to prepare their guns and aim to shoot him. Later, they saw the blue-lapel mandrill, the one in brown and the orangutan in black stand up as well and rush to chase them. Diddy and Dixie decided to abandon the action at that moment and only concentrated on fleeing as fast as their limbs gave them, while those three apes tried to shoot them.

"STAY STILL, DARN IT, BRAT MONKEYS!" the four apes shouted at them.

Diddy and Dixie managed to turn into another corridor, almost bumping into the walls. Both stopped in a hidden corner, while breathing heavily and making sure that the apes didn't walk nearby.

"W-why don't those apes d-die?!" Diddy exclaimed, in despair.

"It's more than clear! They've drunk some of their weird mixtures!" Dixie added in the same way.

"Nooo! And now what are we going to do?!" Diddy complained, putting his hands to his temple. "If we can't get rid of those apes, we're not going to get out of here either."

"It can't be!" Dixie said, stomping too. "We have to finish off those apes, otherwise all will be lost-"

"Here, here they are!" a different voice exclaimed.

Suddenly, Jemky's quartet appeared almost in front of the two, all pointing the gun at them. Diddy and Dixie immediately aimed at them as well and left the corner to confront them.

"Now you'll see, you dwarves!" Jemky told them.

"L-lower your guns... We don't want to kill you!" Diddy replied as his hands trembled as he held the gun.

Then, the quartet began to pull the slides, to which Diddy and Dixie did the same, this time feeling willing to execute any action if necessary.

Diddy and Dixie began to take fast steps in reverse, while the quartet followed them as they placed their fingers on the triggers of their respective guns.

"No! Stay still! Don't dare!" Dixie ordered them menacingly as they tried to get away from them. "Don't do it! We don't want to do it!"

Diddy and Dixie, although they tried to stay focused, deep down they were fearing for their lives and, at the same time, being consumed by the indecision to shoot the four of them... Suddenly, seeing how they pressed the triggers, Diddy and Dixie ducked before the quartet unleashed their gunfire. But instantly, and swallowing remorse, Diddy *shot* the four of them without further ado, in collaboration with Dixie, who had also rushed to execute that action.

The four kids, having been shot in important areas, were falling to the ground and remaining motionless. Diddy and Dixie were breathing agitated and felt their circulation run to their feet when they saw the bodies of the quartet lying on the ground; even if it was their archenemies whom they hated and from whom they had received great humiliations, their conscience weighed on them for having done such an action.

"T-t-they *are*... or not?" Diddy stuttered as even his teeth trembled.

"Uhh... I-I don't know," Dixie replied in kind.

Dixie, with a little trepidation, went to observe the quartet closely. She looked at their eyes, which were closed. She began to assume that the quartet had not been damaged either, since after a few seconds, no trace of wounds could be seen, and she even reached to see that the projectiles received were being ejected from their skins.

"No, they're not!" Dixie said, returning to Diddy immediately. "*Let's leave, let's leave!*"

Diddy and Dixie left the scene immediately and set out to run to another corridor. At one point when they turned to look back, they caught sight of Rocky moving again and then the other three kids doing the same, which confirmed that they were not injured when shot.

"You know what?!" Diddy exclaimed as they ran. "Let's go for those kid-"

Both stopped in their tracks when the lead orangutan appeared by surprise and headed towards them with the gun pointed at them. Diddy and Dixie fired other shots at random, not aiming well at the orangutan, and then swerved back into another corridor to run in a hurry. They no longer really knew what alternatives to take, because if the apes were not harmed, then it would be useless to execute firearms against them.

"*Watch out!*" Dixie whispered, stopping Diddy when she saw that the red-lapel mandrill was passing at the end of that corridor.

They raised their weapons again in case they needed to use them, even if it was in vain. Luckily, the mandrill passed by without noticing the two, which gave them both time to take another escape route to a small hiding point.

"L-look, Dixie," Diddy said, breathing heavily in the hiding corner. "L-let's just go get those kids; we'll tell them to run as fast as they can to the top floor... And if those apes appear, we just shoot them as many times as necessary and so we'll keep shielding them all-"

Suddenly, both of them tensed up again and raised their guns when they saw the five silhouettes of the apes heading towards them. Immediately, they came out of hiding and started running, fleeing in a hurry from those apes.

"STAY STILL, YOU BRATS!" one of the mandrills shouted at them before firing a shot.

Diddy and Dixie were running around, trying to keep their heads down when the apes had returned to execute consecutive shots. At every moment, both had to turn into the corridors to avoid being hit by a projectile. And, as if that were not enough, in one of the corridors the Jemky's quartet appeared to them too, who did not hesitate to try to execute shots against both as well. Diddy and Dixie turned again and again through the first corridors they encountered; they ran so randomly that they even reached the room of the stairs and even began to climb them aimlessly in particular.

"W-where are we going?!" Dixie exclaimed in terror as they climbed the stairs.

"No idea, I just want to leave here!" Diddy exclaimed in the same way.

"Ugh, me too!"

Both made it all the way to the fifth floor. They were about to climb to the last, but stopped and crouched when a shot rang out in that high room, they even reached to hear how that projectile reached the roof of the building.

"Are t-they going upstairs?!" Dixie asked, trembling as she kept on the floor.

Diddy carefully approached the railings of the stairs to check if the apes were nearby. Indeed, the group of apes and the quartet were speeding up and, at the same time, they were pointing their guns upwards as if they were looking for Diddy and Dixie. Diddy returned to Dixie and beckoned for them to continue fleeing, so they prepared to climb to the top floor, but stealthily and with their heads bowed so as not to be seen by the apes.

Suddenly, other gunshots began to echo inside the room, so Diddy and Dixie stopped again and tried to observe where the shots were headed.

"I don't think they've seen us yet," Diddy said, keeping his head down. "Let's just go to-"

Suddenly, a projectile passed near them before other ones began to appear as well. Both prepared their weapons, looked cautiously out of the railings of the staircase and began to shoot at the apes, although they could not aim so well. A few shots later, Diddy and Dixie left the action and went into hiding again, as they could not waste the projectiles. They reached a corner of the top floor, where they both trembled while they no longer knew what actions to take or how it would all end.

"K-keep calm... I know we'll get out of here, Dixie," Diddy told her as they both breathed heavily, even if he didn't really know how and when the outcome of that whole situation would be.

Dixie just fell silent as she looked down with enormous uncertainty as well.

"Let's see if just in case we can leave the ramp ready to escape," Diddy whispered to Dixie.

They both looked everywhere, before moving again. This time, they went to the point where the drop-down ramp was, which they wanted to leave ready for when they were going to flee with the herd of children, Mr. Pinky and Jenny's quartet. When suddenly... upon trying to open the door that was there, it was blocked.

"*Oh, no. It can't be,*" Diddy exclaimed, trying to open the door, but it seemed to be blocked.

"They must be on the top floor!" the voice of one of the apes was heard nearby.

Diddy and Dixie panicked immediately and thought about where to hide; they had to get out of that corner and look for another alternative to escape. Until Diddy came up with a quick idea.

"Dixie, use your hair! We have to jump!" he hurriedly told her.

Dixie nodded immediately, and both of them ran to the same balcony from where they had jumped at the beginning. Trying not to let the apes notice them, Diddy and Dixie climbed onto the railing and, holding on to each other, jumped down with Dixie landing with her hair.

"*There are those brats!*" the apes could be heard.

Diddy and Dixie looked up quickly and could see the group of apes pointing at them in the distance, so they rushed to flee and enter through the first entrance they saw on that floor. Both were now on what appeared to be the third floor, which they had not visited before and therefore did not know any route or know where they were going.

"Where are we going now?!" Diddy exclaimed as they ran aimlessly.

"I-I think it's... Oh, I don't know!" Dixie replied.

Later, in one of those corridors they caught sight of the silhouettes of the apes running, which accelerated their pulsations and made them panic again. Both didn't know any route from that floor where they were, so they only took care about finding a way to hide from those apes, who appeared from time to time in the sight of the two of them. A few minutes later, both managed to find the exit that led to the main stairs, where they didn't hesitate to enter.

"Let's go down to the other floor!" Diddy exclaimed. "It's over there-"

Suddenly, gunshots rang out again. They both crouched down and turned to look quickly. They noticed the presence of the apes, so they quickened their pace towards the stairs.

"*DARN MONKEYS!*" the apes shouted at them as they chased them until they reached the stairs as well. "*STAY STILL, DARN IT!*"

Diddy and Dixie were walking down the stairs when the apes tried to shoot them repeatedly, so both tried to duck and go down, almost throwing themselves down the stairs. Then, they re-entered through the corridors of the second floor, which they already knew well and where they went to a corner to take a "break". Both stopped while trying to think about what actions to take, as it was quite risky for them to try to rescue the herd of kong children and, at the same time, it was risky for

them to flee just the two of them, since the circus animals were outside and could arouse the attention of the apes.

"Now what?!" Diddy exclaimed in desperation, giving himself a few small hits to his head.

"I-I think we only have to escape... but we can't do that now if the ramp door is blocked!" Dixie complained. "We can't even shoot those apes well, although it's the only thing we can do to defend ourselves."

"B-but you still have projectiles at least, right?" Diddy asked hurriedly.

Diddy took Dixie's gun and opened it from the slide to check if it still had projectiles... which had already been run out.

"Oh, no, no, no!" Diddy exclaimed, panicking along with Dixie. "Oh... But I think I do have, let me see."

Diddy checked his gun too, hoping to get a positive response. But when he checked it... he realized that he barely had only one projectile.

"No... *No!*" Diddy exclaimed desperately.

"And now what do we do?! Without that, we won't be able to do anything against those apes!" Dixie added in the same way. "We would only have to flee, because if those apes catch us, goodbye everything."

"But we can't do that either! All entrances are clos--"

Suddenly, both were completely silent after they could hear a few nearby footsteps through the corridors; they had some escape routes available, but they couldn't identify which one the steps were coming from and were afraid to go for that one. Without having more time to think about it, Diddy and Dixie headed down one of the corridors at speed, begging in their minds not to have chosen it wrong.

"There must be more ammunition in the laboratory!" Dixie said as they ran. "Why don't we go quickly to--"

Both stopped abruptly when Jemky's quartet appeared in front; all four pointing their guns firmly at them and threatening looks. Even so, Diddy and Dixie aimed at them too and tried to show confidence regardless of the fact that their guns were almost unusable... But fear came over both again when they felt other guns pressing behind their heads.

"Very funny, aren't you, brat monkeys?!" the apes said, who were behind them.

Diddy and Dixie, trembling with every part of their being, turned around and saw the five apes surrounding them as well. They would both shoot them all at that time... but they couldn't do it now, and even if they did, it would be almost impossible for them to make it out of that scene alive. The lead orangutan didn't hesitate another second to prepare his gun as if he was ready to shoot them.

"Now prepare for the consequ--"

Diddy, even if it could be his last action, shot him with the last projectile he had towards the orangutan's face, knocking him to the ground instantly. He immediately grabbed Dixie's arm to flee the scene, even if the other apes rushed to try to shoot them. Dixie went along with him and spun her hair quickly to make it difficult for the apes to see when they successfully fled.

"*DARNED!*" the apes shouted at them, and they started shooting repeatedly.

Dixie continued to spin her hair as fast as she could and they reached to turn into another corridor they had nearby. The apes continued shooting, but Diddy and Dixie fled in terror through the corridors; both could no longer stop to think about what to do.

Diddy and Dixie were heading to the staircase room; at least there they could take different routes to stay safe in the meantime. But for bad luck, and as if they already knew their steps, the group of apes appeared right at the entrance, cornering them with weapons to make them stop and, in the same way, Jemky's quartet also appeared from one of the corridors to intimidate them too.

"*We've had enough of you!*" the lead orangutan said, pointing at them.

Diddy and Dixie would point their guns at them too, but that was in vain, so they just stood still while being intimidated by all those apes. They both held onto each other's arms and every part of their being trembled... They even remembered DK Island at that time and their loved ones there.

"*Now stay-*"

Instantly, repetitive gunshots rang out at the scene, so Diddy and Dixie clung to each other and closed their eyes tightly... Just thinking that their end would have come... But seconds later, all the noise had turned into total silence... They both opened their eyes little by little as they breathed heavily, and saw that they hadn't been harmed at all... But what they did see next... were the bodies of the apes and the quartet of bully children lying on the floor, *all motionless*... They looked towards the entrance of the stair room and saw none other than *Mr. Pinky!* He was carrying his gun, which was larger and appeared to be a machine gun due the repetitive shots he had fired.

"M-Mr. Pinky?" Diddy stuttered along with Dixie.

"H-how could you..." Dixie added in the same way.

Both, without saying another word and still with agitated breathing, ran towards him, and each took him by the arm, hugging him as if they were little children.

"*Mr. Pinky!*" Dixie exclaimed, still stuttering. "Y-you saved us!"

"H-how did you do it, mister?! Where were you?" Diddy asked hurriedly. "Uhh... He's still hypnotized, right?"

"Obviously, yes... That effect doesn't go away," Dixie said.

"A-anyway! We must get out of here now!" Diddy exclaimed as he continued trembling. "And... those apes *are not*... or are they?"

"I think not; in a while they could get up again," Dixie said as they saw the bodies of the apes, which had no wounds or blood around.

"L-let's go quick then!" Diddy exclaimed.

Both took Mr. Pinky's arm and beckoned him to run along with them to flee the scene, to which he listened to them without problems. They made their way to another corridor, a little way from where they had been, and stopped to think quickly about what to do.

"We have to get those kids out!" Dixie exclaimed, breathing heavily. "And Mr. Pinky has to leave here!"

"Just in case, wouldn't he be immune like those apes too?" Diddy questioned. "If so, he could safeguard us as we get the kids out... But first of all, how will we get them out if everything is closed here?"

"Oh, I don't know either. The only thing open are the high windows of the cells, but we're not going to throw them from there. I could help each one down if I land with my hair, but how do I go up again afterwards?"

"Or if not, we can throw them and let the animals outside catch them... Uh, we can't, right?" Diddy asked with a brief forced smile.

"Hey, of course not! How are we going to do that? We can't even climb up to those windows and help them all to get up and launch themselves.... Wait! I-I think I remembered some-"

"The apes!" Diddy interrupted, pointing behind Dixie.

Diddy grabbed Dixie's arm and pulled Mr. Pinky's hood before starting to run, as at the end of the corridor the whole herd of bad apes reappeared.

"STOP, LITTLE BRATS!" the apes shouted at them. *"And Pinky is with them! WHAT THE-"*

But Mr. Pinky immediately acted again and began repeatedly shooting the entire herd as he walked in reverse, before following Diddy and Dixie. The three then continued to flee through the corridors until they lost sight of the apes.

"There is no time; let's go get the kids while we think about what to do!" Diddy said as they ran in a hurry.

Diddy and Dixie were running and Mr. Pinky was following them. They were arriving at the laboratory, which they entered the instant they reached the door. All the kong children were still in the chairs and just looked at Diddy and Dixie without any expression, but fortunately, they were all fine.

"Quick, let's get them out of those chairs!" Diddy exclaimed. "Mr. Pinky, stay outside and watch that those apes are not nearby!"

"Uh, Mr. Pinky," Dixie said, taking the mister's gun. "It still does have enough projectiles, right?"

Dixie checked the gun... and got a not-so-pleasant surprise, so he looked at Diddy with an expression of uncertainty.

"Oh, no, no, don't tell me that..." Diddy exclaimed, immediately going to look at Mr. Pinky's gun, which was also empty of ammunition. "Oh!... Better hide, Mr. Pinky, hide! You can't go out to fight with those apes like this!"

Diddy and Dixie directed Mr. Pinky to a corner that was next to one of the countertops; they had to help him settle well because he was very large and could be easily seen if the apes appeared. Then, they both went to the chairs where the kong children were, and began to deactivate each one's shackles... But they barely managed to unlock about five, before footsteps echoed behind the lab door. Diddy and Dixie immediately ran to hide behind one of the countertops, before the door slammed open and the same apes entered along with the quartet of bully children, all holding guns firmly and watching everywhere.

"They're not around here!" the lead orangutan exclaimed.

"Let's look for them anyway, just in case!" Jemky suggested. "What if they're hidden around here or something?"

"L-look at those chairs!" Melenky pointed to one of the chairs that Diddy and Dixie had recently deactivated. "They must be-"

Suddenly, everyone got a scare when, suddenly... an alarm began to sound inside the building, accompanied by flashing reddish lights. Everyone looked at each other confused, and even the apes were surprised at this sudden event.

"But what the heck?!" one of the mandrills exclaimed. "But that alarm is from the front door!"

"It must be that pair of brat monkeys! They're trying to get out!" the lead orangutan replied. "I'm going to review! Will, join me! Manny, Terry and Rusty, stay tuned if those little monkeys appear around here!"

The two adult orangutans hurriedly walked out of the laboratory, while the mandrills and the quartet of bully kids stayed inside.

On the other hand, Diddy and Dixie remained hidden and clinging to each other, since they feared that the apes would find them and, in the same way, they did not understand the reason for that alarm at the front door... although they came to suppose that maybe it would be Jenny's quartet that maybe would be playing in that area. For his part, Mr. Pinky kept himself hidden as well; he was in sight of Diddy and Dixie, who signaled him into the distance to stay still and not try to do any action.

"How strange," Rocky said with a frown. "I swore I'd seen those two monkeys head here. I think we'll look for them too."

"But then who could walk around the front door?" the brown-lapel mandrill replied. "Why did the alarm sound?!"

"Maybe it's the Jennies," Mandrew said with a shrug. "Those kids seem to be very restless."

"So, what are you waiting for?!" Jemky exclaimed. "Let's look for that pair of-"

Suddenly, the door slammed open again and the two orangutans entered abruptly... Although they looked very different from when they came out.

"The bosses! IT'S THE BOSSES!" the lead orangutan exclaimed, showing himself so altered... as he had never been seen before. Then, he closed the door and secured it with some speed.

"W-WHAT?!" the mandrill in blue exclaimed, suddenly adopting that expression as well. *"What the heck are you saying?! HOW ABOUT THE BOSSES?!"*

"Are you serious, Ray?!" the mandrill in brown replied, showing shock. *"How the heck are they going to come here?! If they hardly come!"*

"Yeah, and they are coming here all very furious!" the lead orangutan replied with his hands on his head, before quickly heading towards the quartet and giving them a desperate push. *"Kids, get out of here! Go, go, hide!"*

"But what?! What's wrong?!" Jemky exclaimed, looking confused along with the other three kids.

"What bosses are you talking about?!" Rocky added in the same way.

"Just leave!" the lead orangutan replied, leading them to the other door in an altered way. *"Go to your room! Hide and secure the door! Hide in closets if you can! Don't get out until we go to get you!"*

"But why?!" Mandrew replied.

"Who are those ones who are coming?!" Melenky asked.

"JUST GET OUT OF HERE!" the orangutan shouted in despair. *"Those ones must not see you!"*

Without giving them any more time to ask, the lead orangutan snatched the weapons from the four kids, pushed them out of the lab, and slammed the door shut... Suddenly, the five apes began to panic; they had expressions never seen before in them... It was as if for the first time they were frightened by something.

Diddy and Dixie, still in hiding, were quite confused by the sudden scandal and didn't understand what was happening now.

"B-but how about the bosses?! Are you sure?!" the mandrills asked the orangutans.

"Yes, the same ones!" the black-lapel orangutan replied. *"In fact, they're furious because we took more of those quartz and the other star scalpel!"*

"Oh, no, no, don't tell me they found out!" a mandrill exclaimed. "And are they coming to?"

Suddenly, the laboratory door began to open quickly even though the lead orangutan had blocked it. Then, with a sudden abruptness... three tall figures in dark floor-length cloaks entered, who headed towards the apes...

"HOW FUNNY, YOU STUPID APES!" one of those figures who arrived shouted, pulling each of the apes by the fur in an aggressive way. *"You thought you could get away with it!"*

"Give us back our scalpel and our quartz!" another of the figures shouted in the same way. *"We had already given you some ones to use! What the heck did you do with those?!"*

"Wait a minute..." the third figure said, looking at one of the countertops, where there were some jars of mixtures spilled to the floor, and where there was even the scalpel apparatus thrown away, which had been the work of Jenny's quartet when they had taken up the guns and caused a disaster in the laboratory. The unknown figure observed all this and, after a few seconds, turned to look at

the apes and went towards them and then began to pull them by the fur and even slap them.
“*WHAT THE HECK HAVE YOU BEEN DOING?! WHY IS EVERYTHING LIKE THIS?!... And I see that you haven't even made any progress with these ape kids.*”

“*WALK OUT RIGHT NOW!*” the first figure ordered.

The three mysterious ones began to take the limbs, ears or fur of the *five apes*, and then dragged them out of the laboratory as if they were dolls. The most curious thing about that... it was that the apes barely struggled a little and emitted squeals as they were carried away, but *they did not defend themselves in the way that would be expected of them.*

Diddy and Dixie were completely paralyzed and confused; they didn't understand anything of the sudden turn the scene had taken... First of all, they didn't know anything about those mysterious figures who had arrived, they could not even see their appearance better, since they wore hoods and cloaks similar to those carried by the apes at the beginning... But the most curious thing was that those figures... *did not* appear to be apes; the way they walked and their posture were quite straightened, and their stature was taller than that of apes.

“*STAY STILL!*” those figures were heard screaming outside the laboratory.

Something that did put Diddy and Dixie in doubt... were the *voices* that those figures had... Something from those voices seemed to have been heard *somewhere* before. Both got up to look at the laboratory as if they wanted to go and see what was happening out there. They doubted it at first, but then they made agreements with signals to go peek through the door of the laboratory and observe the scene... What they were now seeing was only leaving them little by little more shocked than they were.

“*WE SAID STAY STILL!*” the mysterious figures shouted at the apes, whom they had on the floor.

Suddenly, those three figures took out of their cloaks some whips, and began to whip the five apes repeatedly, while they emitted loud squeals typical of an ape being attacked. Later, the three figures began to pull the apes roughly as they yelled at them.

“*What did you do with the first quartzes we gave you?!*” one of the figures shouted.

“*And you haven't even mechanized any of those monkeys!*” another one added in the same way.

“*THOSE KIDS SHOULD BE READY FOR TOMORROW! YOU SHOULD ALREADY HAVE THEM IN REFRIGERATION!*”

The figures then whipped the apes again. The latter, for some reason, did not even answer them; they were only subdued by those figures... The scene looked quite similar to when the apes whipped Jemky's quartet.

Diddy and Dixie were only more confused, much more with those words spoken by those mysterious figures... Something seemed to indicate that the aberrant plan to mechanize kong children... *wouldn't exactly come from* the group of apes.

“*YOU'RE DARN USELESS APES!*” one of the figures shouted at the apes after whipping them... and before pulling down the hood from his head.

Diddy and Dixie were almost out of breath and felt their blood circulate from head to toe after they could finally see the face of the one who pulled down his hood: a middle-aged *human man* with

one normal eye and the other covered by a *patch* was what they could see. Both were completely gaping and trying to control their breathing; they wondered if that whole situation was not just a nightmare or if they were hallucinating because of the fear. They looked a little more at the other figures... and they reached to see in one of them that under his cloak he had what appeared to be a *prosthetic leg*.

"Don't try to escape, COME BACK!"

The five apes, putting up some resistance to them, managed to free themselves from the figures and started running, while the three figures went after them, whipping them on the way several times.

The last thing Diddy and Dixie saw was that, as they ran and their cloaks lifted, the last of those figures *didn't have a full forearm*.

"No... N-n-no, no, no, no!" Diddy stammered quietly, trying to regain the calm they didn't even have. "It c-can't be! It's not possible!... H-how..."

Suddenly, Dixie began to tremble much more than before and even almost fainted, but she held onto the wall in time, and Diddy tried to calm her down even if he was still blank. She felt a huge wallow inside as she tried to process what they had seen and heard.

"W-what... What...?" Dixie stuttered, making an effort not to collapse.

"I don't understand..." Diddy replied as he looked into the corridors. "How is... Oh, no, no, I don't know what all this means... So... All these kids whom they want to mechanize, are actually for *those...*"

Both no longer knew what to think and only heard in the corridors at that group of three ones chasing the apes and whipping them between times, in turn that the apes screamed with each blow.

"Uh... D-Dixie..." Diddy said, trying to keep himself stable. "I'm sorry we're in a bind right now, b-but... we have to get these kids out of here! And fast! Before those apes or those... *human men* come back."

Dixie, trying to control the breathing and tension, nodded as best she could, and then they both headed back towards the kong children, but not before Diddy peeked out the door one last time to make sure they weren't seen by those apes along with the three figures, who were... *the circus tamers*.

"Quick!" Diddy whispered before closing the door and securing it. "We'll take them out the door over there."

Both continued to unlock all the shackles of the chairs and, simultaneously, told the kong children to go to the other door of the laboratory and wait there. Likewise, they went to the corner where Mr. Pinky was hiding, who was also ordered to go to the door.

"Oh... but how do we get them out?!" Diddy exclaimed, in despair with his hands on his head. "And we have to think fast!"

"Uhh... I-I think that..." Dixie replied, trying to recover as she continued to tremble. "T-that we could take them out through that duct that is on the top floor... It'll take them up to the roof."

"What?! But how are they going to go through there?" Diddy asked, looking at her strangely.

"I left that rope there. I can go up and climb to the top and there we help everyone out. By the way... you said we could throw them all from there and the animals outside can catch them."

"Hey, hey, hey, but that's very risky!" Diddy exclaimed. "I just said it at random, Dixie."

"But it's not a bad idea either... And that's all we could do. And there is no time! Much less if *those ones...* *Urgh!*" Dixie added, grumbling as she tried to name the group of tamers.

Diddy wanted to think about it a little, but he could barely concentrate well and saw that he had no other choice, so he just shrugged and nodded. Then, both of them continued to lead the herd of kong children to the door. Finally, they took up their guns again, even if they would no longer be useful.

"Almost everyone is ready!" Diddy hurriedly exclaimed. "I just hope they won't find us out."

"We'll check if we can get out throughout the ramp anyways," Dixie added.

Diddy stood in front of the door and turned the knob cautiously, then peeked out to see that no one was around.

"It's all clear! Let's go!" Diddy announced, starting to take each child's arm simultaneously so that they were leaving. "Mr. Pinky, go to the front! We have to go to the top floor; guide them there... Oh, we don't even have projectiles, but take care of the kids anyways, Mr. Pinky!"

Then, everyone left the laboratory: Mr. Pinky was at the head of the entire herd, still holding his empty gun firmly, in the middle was the herd of kong children, and finally, Diddy and Dixie went to watch that everything was in order and nothing stood in their way.

"Now!" Diddy exclaimed.

The whole herd began to head as fast as they could towards the main staircase room, which fortunately they were able to reach without problems. Immediately, they started climbing all the stairs using all four limbs non-stop. From time to time, Diddy and Dixie turned to look down to make sure none of the evil groups appeared. Both were quite frightened now after knowing that in that building were also the *very tamers of the circus*; they had no idea what the whole thing was really like, but what they were sure of was that for nothing in the world they should be seen after everything that happened in that zoo, even if Dixie had all the grudges reviving inside her at the time. Another matter that worried them both was that the animals that were from the circus were outside as well. There were so many things to think about and analyze, but there was hardly time to do it.

Almost a couple of minutes later, everyone managed to reach the top floor. Diddy and Dixie were quite exhausted, but they were trying to maintain resistance so they could continue with the rescue mission. Both even checked the drop-down ramp area for the last time... but the door was still secured, so they discarded that alternative definitively. Then, they went to the cell room, where the duct would be where they planned to take out the herd of kong children.

"By the way... And the Jennies?!" Diddy asked, remembering that they were missing. "Where are they?"

"Oh... I don't know, they're left," Dixie exclaimed, trying not to get into more despair. "W-we'll look for them later; we have to take all these children to the roof right now, at least there they'll be a little safer."

Dixie returned to the stairs and looked for the rope she had left on the railings. Luckily, it was still there, and Dixie took it without problems to return with it to the herd.

"I hope we can finally get something right," Dixie whispered, looking earnestly at the duct, before speaking to the herd. "Stand back for a while."

Dixie made space between the herd and took a few steps back. Then, she gained momentum, ran under the duct and jumped as high as she could, using her spinning hair to reach the walls of it. In doing so, Dixie held on with her limbs stretched out by the walls of the duct, and began to climb until she reached the outside. It took her half a minute to reach the top, where she could be on the roof of the building and from where she could see the night sky and part of the sea outside that islet. Dixie arranged the rope and held it at one end, then dropped the other end through the duct.

"Now, go up!" Dixie ordered them from above.

"Come on, go up, go up!" Diddy ordered the herd of kong children, giving them little pushes to do so. "One by one."

Diddy guided all the kong children to take the rope and climb up it to reach the top. The kongs listened to him without problems and began to climb one by one by the rope. For her part, Dixie held the rope with all her strength, pressing it with her limbs and with her own weight to be able to resist. When there were already a considerable number of kongs at the top, she asked them to help her hold the rope, so that the rest of the kongs could climb faster.

"We're almost done, almost done!" Dixie exclaimed.

The last of them to climb was Diddy, who was able to do it quickly and without problems. The only one left was Mr. Pinky, with whom they could have some difficulty due to his size and weight.

"Come on, we have to hold it together," Diddy said before speaking to Mr. Pinky through the duct. "Come up, Mr. Pinky! Do your best without giving up!"

Diddy and Dixie held the rope tightly, asking some of the other kong children to help them as much as they could. Then, they held the rope together and pulled it hard while Mr. Pinky was climbing. They had to make a lot of effort because he weighed a lot, but finally, they got it. Reaching to place his hands on the roof, Mr. Pinky was able to get completely out of the duct until he reached the roof of the building.

"We're all here!" Diddy exclaimed, giving a small smile, before fading it away again. "Oh, now what?"

"We have to look for the animals... Oh, and I hope they can hear us from here."

Diddy and Dixie began to walk on the roof of the building, trying to locate the animals in all the darkness. Both looked carefully from the edges of the roof, but still could not see any of them, beside the fact that there were several trees that made it more difficult for them to see. The weather didn't seem to be friendly to them either, because it was a pretty cold wind that they felt was freezing them.

"Have you already found them?!" Diddy asked Dixie from one of the edges.

"No!" Dixie replied. "But their ship is there, so they still must have to be around here... Wait! I think I saw them there... Oh, no, they weren't!"

"I saw them already! I saw them!" Diddy announced, jumping before pointing. *"There they are!"*

Dixie went to where Diddy was and observed where he was pointing... Indeed, it was the herd of animals, who were all grouped together and were seen interacting with each other worriedly.

"Good! We have to call them," Dixie said. "Oh, I just hope it doesn't get heard until inside the building."

"Well, here we go," Diddy added before taking a breath so he could speak as loudly as he could. *"HEEEY! OVER HERE!"*

"WE NEED YOU! LISTEN TO US!" Dixie shouted too.

"WE NEED YOUR HELP! LISTEN TO US, PLEASE!"

Diddy and Dixie continued to call the herd of animals, but they couldn't catch their attention because of the height. Even so, the animals began to look at each other as if they had heard something, but as if they did not take it so seriously.

"Oh, they don't see us," Diddy complained.

"I think I have an idea," Dixie said.

Suddenly, Dixie took out of her beret that emerald, which she had stored and, trying to aim as best as possible and in rhythm with the wind, threw it towards the herd of animals, getting it to fall very close to them and capturing their attention instantly. The animals looked up after that, so Diddy and Dixie called them back immediately.

"HEY, OVER HERE, OVER HERE!" Dixie exclaimed, gesturing to them with her arms.

"LISTEN TO US! WE NEED YOUR HELP! LOOK AT US, LOOK AT US!"

The animals seemed to have seen them finally, as they all looked and pointed at Diddy and Dixie and muttered to each other.

"YES, YES, IT'S US: DIDDY AND DIXIE!" Dixie hurriedly shouted. *"YOU HAVE TO HELP US!"*

"Yes, yes, yes, it's them, I saw them already!" the animals murmured to each other before looking at them both in the distance. *"YEAH, TELL US!"*

"They heard us!" Dixie exclaimed with a short smile, before starting to give the animals instructions. *"LISTEN TO US WELL... WE WANT YOU TO CATCH ALL THE KONG KIDS... WE HAVE THEM ALL UP HERE! WE CAN'T GO OUT THROUGH ANYWHERE ELSE! SO, WE'RE GOING TO THROW THEM AND YOU'LL CATCH THEM AND TAKE THEM TO THE SHIP!"*

The animals continued to murmur as if trying to process the prompts Dixie had told them.

"WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?!" the animals shouted. *"WHAT CHILDREN WHAAAT?!"*

"THAT WE ARE GOING TO THROW THEM AND YOU WILL CATCH THEM!" Diddy repeated.

Dixie walked towards one of the kong children and took his arm to direct him towards the edge of the building, trying to show him to the animals.

"HERE'S ONE! YOU HAVE TO CATCH HIM!" Dixie shouted at them from above.

The animals were a little confused and fearful of the idea that Diddy and Dixie were giving them. Everyone looked at each other not knowing what to do.

"H-HEY, B-BUT THAT'S DANGEROUS!" the animals shouted at them.

"JUST CATCH THEM!" Diddy replied. *"WE HAVE NO OTHER OPTIONS! AND THERE IS NO TIME!"*

"Well, here we go then. They'll catch him anyway," Dixie said before speaking to the kong boy. "Listen to me, boy, you have to jump. Those animals over there are going to catch you and then you'll hide in the ship again, okay?"

Diddy, for his part, had gone to warn the rest of the kong children that they should also do the same and directed them all near the edge of the building, but at the same time, taking care that none were going to overshoot. Then, he returned to Dixie, who was giving the instructions to one of the kong children.

"Well, it's now or never," Dixie said, before speaking to the animals again from above. *"HEY, GET READY, WE'RE GOING TO THROW THE FIRST ONE! GET CLOSER TO THE BUILDING!"*

"Okay, now just jump," Diddy told the boy kong. Then he spoke to the animals. *"HERE HE GOES! CATCH HIM!"*

Diddy and Dixie, although knowing that it was extremely risky, encouraged the kong boy to jump downhill and made sure that the animals were attentive. Then, helping the child with a small push, they made him throw himself from that height of the building. Both begged that it would not go wrong and stayed to watch as the kong boy fell. Immediately, the animals, although murmuring hurriedly and trembling, raised their legs or prepared their backs to catch the little kong. Fortunately... they managed to do so, holding the child safe and sound and then leaving him on the ground.

"TAKE HIM TO THE SHIP!" Diddy ordered them from above.

"He says take him to the ship!" one of the animals told the others.

"I'll take them!" another of them said, taking the kong boy to direct him towards the ship in a hurry.

Diddy and Dixie smiled a little to see that the plan would work... So, they both nodded at each other and went to another of the kong children to direct him to the edge of the building. They only hoped that no obstacles would be presented to them while executing the plan.

"Well, you have to do the same, just jump," Dixie told a kong girl, and then spoke to the animals. *"HEY! HERE GOES ANOTHER ONE! CATCH HER!"*

In the same way, Diddy and Dixie gave the kong girl a little push, and she immediately threw herself down. Both stopped to watch her fall safely and, fortunately, the animals managed to catch

her safe and sound too and then direct her towards the ship. Diddy and Dixie smiled a little more and made gestures of victory, before moving on to direct another kong boy.

"Well, it's your turn, just jump down and those animals will catch you," Dixie told another kong boy.

"*HERE GOES ANOTHER ONE!*" Diddy announced to the animals.

Both gave the kong a push, and he threw himself without problems, being successfully caught by the herd of animals. Diddy and Dixie made small leaps of victory and then continued to guide the other kong children.

"I just hope none of those darn maniac ones notice," Dixie said about the apes, the tamers, and Jemky's quartet.

Diddy and Dixie continued to help more kongs to jump one by one, who were caught by the herd of animals, and they were taken to the ship to stay in the cabins of the same. The plan was working out quite well for them, and they had more than a third of kong children safe... But suddenly, they also remembered that they were missing *a few more kong children*.

"The Jennies!" Diddy exclaimed after remembering them with concern. "Where could they be?!"

"Oh, no! They're still somewhere in the building," Dixie said before pausing for a few seconds to think.

"Oh, and I hope they haven't been caught by those tamers, that I have no idea what they'll want to do with them," Diddy added with greater concern.

"I'll go get them," Dixie said.

"W-what?!" Diddy exclaimed, panicking at what she said. "Hey, no, Dixie! Don't even think about going back there!... I mean, of course we have to go back to look for them, but it's danger-"

"No, no, keep helping these kids jump meanwhile," Dixie interrupted, trying to calm him down. "I'll try to look for the Jennies."

Dixie started heading towards the duct, which made Diddy much more worried, and he went to stop her immediately.

"But what?! Hey, no, Dixie! Wait!" Diddy exclaimed, taking her arm. "I-I don't think it's a good idea to go like that! It's very dangerous there! There are *those tamer-*"

"Diddy, but we have to go anyway," Dixie interrupted seriously.

"Yes, of course, but I'll go with you. Let's finish helping these kids escape first."

"But you can stay and keep helping them, while I'll go for the Jennies," Dixie insisted. "Besides, I'll be able to climb back up with my hair, don't worry. And you'll be safe here, Diddy; down there you're going to expose yourself, and remember that there are those tamers; those ones have no mercy on anything... I don't want anything bad to happen to you, Diddy."

"But... I don't want anything bad to happen to you either," Diddy told her, placing a hand on her shoulder and looking at her with concern.

Dixie was silent for a few seconds as she returned the same look, but she also wanted to let him know that he wouldn't have to worry.

"Diddy... trust me," she said, trying to smile a little. "I know I'll be fine. I just have to bring the Jennies; I hope they're not that far away."

Dixie just breathed and turned to continue heading towards the duct. Meanwhile, Diddy was only filling himself with concern for her; both of them had already exposed themselves to so much danger in that whole situation and he couldn't help but think that something might go wrong. Even so, he also knew that there was not much time to decide what to do.

"Hey, Dixie!" Diddy called her.

"Yeah?" Dixie replied, stopping just before she went down the duct.

"Uh... Take good care of yourself..." he said, giving her a worried look. "Please..."

Dixie was going to nod normally, but this time, she stared at him silently for a few seconds... Suddenly, as if for a moment escaping the situation, she went towards him and hugged him tightly. Diddy was somewhat confused at first... but then, he hugged Dixie back with the same intensity. Both felt a small acceleration in their heartbeat as they were close... It was something that they seemed to have not felt for a long time, but that made them restart life for a few milliseconds in the middle of that journey. Then, they separated as they looked into each other's eyes for a moment; the embrace had actually lasted barely three seconds, but long enough for several memories between the two of them to invade their thoughts again. Diddy took Dixie's hands subtly, before she turned and continued on her way down the duct, while Diddy stared at her for another couple of seconds until he lost sight of her.

"DIDDY! DIXIE! WHAT HAPPENED?!" some of the animals were heard shouting from below, restoring Diddy's sense of reality.

"Uh!... YEAH, YEAH, I'M GOING! ONE MOMENT!" Diddy replied, starting to head back towards the edge of the building.

On the way, and inevitably, Diddy's eyes began to moisten a little until he almost dropped a few tears, but he only wiped them and had to restrain himself in order to continue with the plan. Then, he headed to another kong children, and took him to the edge of the building to jump.

"ALRIGHT! CATCH HIM!" Diddy shouted to the animals from the height, recovering his posture.

On the other hand, Dixie had returned inside the building and was heading towards the staircase. She carried the gun with her even if it wouldn't work. But as she went downstairs, she was also wiping a few tears from her eyes after hugging Diddy; for a moment she began to think about so many things about him and the situation they were in. Even so, it was not a good time to get sentimental, so Dixie continued on her way without losing the goal of looking for the mechanical children.

Dixie made it to the second floor, where she assumed Jenny's quartet might be. She crept out of the entrance of the room and observed that no one was around. She deep down was trembling with fear, as inside that building were now all the groups of known evil ones, some more dangerous than others. But even so, Dixie had to stand her ground and act as quickly as she could. Without

stopping looking everywhere, she began to move through the corridors. She had no idea if she was in the right place to look for Jenny's quartet, but she assumed they would be nearby.

"And who the heck knows?!" a known voice was heard in the distance. *"No one else is here!"*

Dixie became alert when she recognized that the voice belonged to one of the tamers. She wished to load ammunition into her gun right then and there and go out to face them all, but now she just had to be careful not to be seen by any of them. Even so, she approached stealthily towards where those tamers would be with the apes. Upon arriving, she peeked out the corner of a corridor, and what she could see only made her more tense.

"We're telling you we don't know, darn it!" the lead orangutan shouted towards the tamers... which was obvious that they didn't listen to him in his language. *"HERE IS A COUPLE OF BRAT MONKEYS WHO WANTED TO FREE THEM, MAYBE THEY WERE-"*

The tamers, before the orangutan continued, gave them other whips.

"DUMB AND USELESS APES! WHAT DID YOU DO WITH ALL THE KIDS TO MECHANIZE?!" one of the tamers shouted at them.

Dixie reached to observe that they were inside the laboratory and, of course, they would have noticed the absence of the herd of kong children. The tamers were giving the apes a rebuke; they were treated quite harshly, and Dixie only wondered if those apes had actually been *under the orders* of the tamers all along. Even so, there was no time to draw conclusions, so Dixie only resumed her search with Jenny's quartet, who did not seem to be inside the laboratory, fortunately.

"WE SAID MAYBE IT WAS A COUPLE OF MONKEYS, DARN IT!" the apes could be heard insisting.

Dixie continued to search the corridors for Jenny's quartet, but they still gave no signs... Suddenly, the same alarm that belonged to the front door resounded throughout the building, at the same time that a reddish light was flashing everywhere.

Although it was not at all certain, Dixie came up with the idea of going to take a look at the front door, maybe it would be Jenny's quartet this time. So, Dixie started running and headed towards the stairs that led to the first floor... And she had to do it as fast as she could, since it was quite certain that the evil groups would be heading there too.

Arriving at the first floor, Dixie ran to the front door. Fortunately, no one could be seen hanging around yet, so she was able to arrive without problems... What she saw there, gave her back a little calm and even made her smile for half a second: those kids from Jenny's quartet were the ones who were hanging around the front door and playing with it.

"Hey!" Dixie called them, heading towards them. *"Jenny, Mandy, Ricky, Melvyn... Come on, come on, we're leaving!"*

Acting rather hastily, Dixie gave the quartet a few arm pulls to accompany her, to which they followed her without problems.

"We're going to get you out of here! Follow me!" Dixie ordered.

Dixie started running again, and then the four of them kept up with her while smiling as if it were a game, even giving Dixie small jostles playfully on the way, so she had to stop in certain corners to calm them down.

"Listen, we're going to go to the top floor," Dixie said, looking everywhere at the same time. "We're going to go up a duct. I'm going to guide you, okay?"

As expected, the four of them didn't understand any of the context, but they nodded a smile to Dixie anyway and continued to follow in her footsteps.

"There is no one!" one of the tamers in the distance was heard exclaiming.

"And why on earth did the alarm sound then?!" another one was heard saying.

The kids from Jenny's quartet were somewhat curious upon hearing the tamers, but Dixie gestured them not to give them importance. Then, Dixie directed them to the staircase room, where she would make them climb straight to the top floor.

"Let's go up," Dixie told them. "Please don't run away anywhere else, okay?"

Then, the five of them started speeding up the stairs; Dixie was guiding them all the way. The route was proving easy, which made her keep a little calm... When suddenly, reaching the third floor, Melvyn stopped abruptly and began to descend the stairs.

"Huh?! Hey, Melvyn!" Dixie exclaimed in confusion. "What are you doin- *Oh, no, no, no!*"

Suddenly, the quartet went back down the stairs when, going up in the direction of them, was *Jemky's quartet*, who were speeding trying to catch up with them, but Jenny's were willing to confront them.

"Stop there, you stupid kids!" Jemky told them as he made his way to the other quartet.

Dixie ran immediately to try to stop them, but Jenny and company had already begun to lunge at the other quartet, who did not let themselves be attacked by them and, in the middle of the fight, they were all stumbling on the steps.

"No, stop!" Dixie ordered Jenny's quartet, trying to pull them away from the other quartet.

Suddenly, Jemky and Mandrew grabbed Dixie's arms and hair abruptly.

"What the heck are you doing now?!" Jemky shouted. *"Where are you headed-"*

Dixie hurriedly hit them and made a spinning movement with her hair, pushing them away instantly. Immediately, the kids from Jenny's quartet lunged at the other kids again, and then Dixie joined in helping them get them out of the way.

"What the heck are you going to do with the Jennies?!" Rocky asked Dixie in the middle of the fight.

But Dixie didn't bother to answer him and continued to confront them until she tried to push them down the steps.

"Stupid monkey girl, what the he-" Mandrew exclaimed, before Ricky and Melvyn slapped him and then Dixie gave him a hard push, this time sending him downhill to the stairs.

Then, Jenny and Mandy were hitting Rocky, though being restrained by Jemky and Melenky, but Ricky rushed to help them before Dixie pushed him down too to send him rolling down the steps. Immediately, the five of them tried to do the same with Jemky and Melenky before Rocky and Mandrew tried to climb back up. A few hits later, they managed to push them both, even making them involuntarily push Rocky and Mandrew again.

"Quick! Let's go on, let's keep going!" Dixie told Jenny and company immediately.

The five resumed their way and continued up the stairs at full speed, while Jemky and company continued to roll downhill, then got up and tried again to catch up with Dixie and the other quartet. Fortunately, Dixie and the four mechanical children were already quite distant with Jemky's quartet.

"STOP, MONKEY! COME BACK HERE!" Rocky ordered her as they followed her.

"WAIT FOR US TO CALL OUR DADS!" Mandrew added.

Dixie had finally made it with Jenny's quartet to the top floor and now they were heading towards the cell room.

"IF I WERE YOU, I WOULDN'T GO TO YOUR DADS NOW!" Dixie shouted at them from a distance, referring to the group of apes being with the tamers.

Dixie arrived under the duct where they would have to leave, and made the same movement with her hair to be able to climb, before quickly telling the quartet what they had to do.

"Wait a moment there! I'll tell you to go up!" Dixie said as she hurried up the duct. She reached the outside of the roof and looked for Diddy immediately. *"Diddy, help me! I brought the Jennies!"*

Diddy was still helping the last kongs to jump out of the building; only three children were left, to whom he whispered to stay still for a moment. Then, he headed to Dixie and helped her hold the rope.

"Is everything okay?" Diddy asked Dixie.

"The idiots Jemky and those others are coming! Stay holding the rope; I'll return to guard. If you want, call Mr. Pinky to help us too."

Immediately, Dixie went back down the duct and spoke to Jenny's quartet.

"Come on, go up, go up!" Dixie told the four children hurriedly.

Jenny's quartet were somewhat confused, but they still complied with Dixie's order, and began to climb the rope one by one.

Diddy, for his part, had called Mr. Pinky and even the three remaining children to help hold the rope.

"Don't release it! We have to help the four of them to get on," Diddy told them.

Between the five, they held the rope tightly while Jenny's quartet had already begun to climb; the latter went one below the other, but all climbing up at the same time. Seconds later, Jenny was already reaching the top.

"Quick, quick!" Dixie told the quartet from below.

"Stop there, girl!" Jemky's quartet suddenly appeared at the entrance of the room.

Dixie immediately panicked seeing that Jemky and company were getting closer, so she had to take quick action.

"Here come those bullies!" Dixie warned Diddy and the others as she joined in holding on to the rope in desperation. "Pull the rope! Throw it up! *Quick, quick!*"

"You won't come out of here, you darn monkeys!" Jemky exclaimed when they were about to stop them.

With Dixie and Jenny's quartet attached to the rope, Diddy along with Mr. Pinky and the other three kong children pulled the rope hard upwards, as hard as they could to make them all climb in one pull. But at the same time, Jemky's quartet had reached to jump to catch Dixie, who was pulled by the feet and hair to try to lower her, but Dixie clung with all her strength to the rope, at the same time that Diddy and company struggled to pull it up.

"Stay still, monkey!" Rocky ordered her while they were trying to pull Dixie and at the same time receiving continuous kicks from her.

Seconds later, Jenny, Mandy and later Melvyn managed to climb to the roof and, as if acting by mirror effect, began to pull the rope as well. On the other hand, Dixie was kicking Jemky's quartet and, a few attacks later, managed to push them away and take advantage to be able to go up. Ricky managed to get outside, and later Dixie managed to get out as well.

"Idiots!" Dixie said mockingly to Jemky's quartet from above.

"Now, we are complete!" Diddy exclaimed, jumping around. "Let's go! We all have to get down from here."

Immediately, Diddy and Dixie directed the others to near the edge of the building. Then, they resumed the process of helping the remaining kongs jump out.

"HERE GOES ANOTHER ONE!" Diddy warned the herd of animals from above.

Diddy helped the three kongs jump, while Dixie quickly explained to Jenny's quartet what they had to do.

"And when we tell you, you'll do the same, okay?" Dixie told the four of them.

"The children are done!" Diddy reported as he returned to the group. "Mr. Pinky is left; will we also throw him like that?"

"Of course, there is no other way," Dixie replied with a shrug. "I just hope they resist his weight, although I think they could--"

"For the last time: stop, you pair of dumb monkeys!"

Diddy and Dixie turned to look and saw Jemky's quartet heading towards them... All four with guns in hand and pointing at them. They both stood still as they tried to remain calm in the face of the sudden obstacle.

"So, you don't give up on wanting to get out of here, right?" Jemky said in a mocking tone as he pointed at them. "Our dads won't like all this at all, did you know? In fact, they already want you two dead. So, you'd better come back-"

Suddenly, the kids from Jenny's quartet were in a fighting position and aggressively rushed towards Jemky's quartet.

"What the heck with you!" Mandrew said. *"Stop being nosy, you darn mechanical kids!"*

Jenny's quartet began attacking Jemky's, hitting them, and even trying to take away their guns. Suddenly... Mr. Pinky also joined the confrontation and tried to stop Jemky's quartet.

"NO! Enough was enough!" Mandrew exclaimed, pulling the slide of his gun just before Mr. Pinky reached him. He immediately opened fire and shot him.

"NOOO, MISTER!" Diddy and Dixie exclaimed, horrified at the scene.

Almost instantly, Jemky's quartet began shooting at Jenny's quartet randomly. Diddy and Dixie immediately ducked while they had been left with blank minds, not knowing whether to stay right there or risk jumping off the building just the two of them. Mr. Pinky and Jenny's quartet were lying on the floor... or rather on the roof, but after a few seconds, the latter got up again and pounced on Jemky's quartet, at the cost of continuing to receive projectiles in the middle of the fight.

Suddenly, and to the great relief of Diddy and Dixie, Mr. Pinky began to get up... And he didn't have any trace of injuries.

"Oh, right! Mr. Pinky was also given that sedative immunizer when he arrived!" Jemky exclaimed before trying to shoot Mr. Pinky again, but he had already lunged at him and knocked him down abruptly and then snatched the gun. *"Hey, give me that!"*

Jemky tried to fight against Mr. Pinky, but it was evident that he had much more strength and musculature compared to that of a child, so he could easily take it away from him.

"Mr. Pinky! Give it to me here!" Diddy hastened to order him.

Then, Mr. Pinky threw the gun at Diddy and Dixie, who immediately took it and with what they were able to stand up.

"If you shoot, we'll shoot you before!" Mandrew threatened them both from a distance, pointing the gun at them. *"Drop that gun-"*

But in the same way, Jenny's quartet did not give up on continuing to attack them and even began to copy Mr. Pinky's movements in snatching the guns from Jemky's quartet. Mr. Pinky along with the mechanical children fought to snatch the guns from the bullies, leaving them lying on the roof due to the strength of Mr. Pinky. Then, they managed to snatch the gun from Melenky and, consecutively, from Mandrew, and then threw them at Diddy and Dixie.

"*NO, DARN IT!*" Rocky exclaimed as he was overtaken by Jenny's quartet and the teacher. He shot them a couple of times, but they weren't enough to stop them. "*Darn, but do something, you guys!*" he told the other three kids in his group.

Diddy and Dixie now had Jemky, Mandrew and Melenky intimidated, while these three cursed them helplessly. Seconds later, the teacher and Jenny's quartet had managed to take the gun from Rocky, and threw it at Diddy and Dixie immediately; now each of the two held two guns in both hands and pointed it at Jemky's quartet.

"*Stay still, huh,*" Diddy ordered, pointing with a menacing look.

"Now, Mr. Pinky, it's your turn to jump," Dixie said to the teacher. "Come here."

While continuing to aim at the quartet, Diddy and Dixie took steps until they reached the edge of the building, inviting Mr. Pinky to follow them. Likewise, Jenny's quartet followed them as well. Then, Diddy spoke to the circus animals from above.

"*HEY, WE'RE GOING TO THROW MR. PINKY... CATCH HIM!*" Diddy shouted, continuing to aim at the bully kids.

"*Wait a minute! Who are you talking to, monkey?!*" Jemky asked, looking shocked along with the other three kids.

Diddy and Dixie refused to answer and just went on to instruct Mr. Pinky to execute the jump.

"Jump, Mr. Pinky!" Dixie said, giving him a little push with her elbow along with Diddy.

"*HERE HE GOES! CATCH HIM CAREFULLY!*" Diddy warned the animals.

Then, Mr. Pinky jumped off the building without problems. The herd of animals was ready to catch him, although they became tense when they saw Mr. Pinky fall due to his size... Even so, although with some greater effort, they managed to catch him, and then they took him to the ship as well.

"What the heck have you done, *you stupid monkeys?!*" Rocky asked Diddy and Dixie. "*And don't tell me you've taken those kids out! And who are you talking to?! Who is down there?!*"

Jemky's quartet tried to approach the edge of the building, but Diddy and Dixie stepped forward with guns pointed at them.

"*Urgh! Wait until our dads know this,*" Jemky helplessly warned them. "*And tell us who is down there!*"

"Look, we can't tell you who's down there," Diddy said earnestly. "But we can tell you *who are the bosses* that your dads talked about... You know who? They are those *circus tamers!* The same one where we were!"

"W-what?!" Jemky exclaimed with the other kids. "What are you talking about?! You're talking clowning!"

"It's serious!" Dixie replied. "And if I were you, I wouldn't even go to look for them right now; those tamers are much crueller than your dads, what's more, your dads are under the orders of those cursed tamers! They're being whipped by them!"

"Did you try millipede venom now, monkeys?" Rocky asked them, looking at them mockingly. "You're already saying inconsistencies!"

"*It's all true!*" Diddy replied. "So, it'll be a bad idea to go ask them for help to stop us, and look, we're telling you for your sake!"

"Yeah, yeah, how funny you two are!" Jemky told them sarcastically. "Good try to scare us, and I don't even know why you're pointing guns at us; I bet you're not going to kill us."

Jemky's quartet then started walking towards Diddy and Dixie while they continued to point at them, even if it was true that they wouldn't shoot them unless they were extremely necessary.

"Get away! I don't want to kill you!" Diddy warned them as his hands began to tremble.

"*You guys, come here,*" Dixie whispered to Jenny's quartet.

Jenny's quartet joined Diddy and Dixie, without looking away from Jemky's quartet. Then, Diddy released a shot in the air to try to scare the four of them, but they ignored him.

"I think let's jump right now!" Dixie whispered to Diddy.

"What?!"

"We'll hold each other between the six; I'll help you all land with my hair. We have no choice... Jenny, Mandy, Melvyn, Ricky! Hold on to us!"

Without having any more time to think about it, Diddy stood next to Jenny's quartet and Dixie, and the six stood together, while Jemky's quartet took steps in their direction.

"I just want to tell you... to go back and hide as your dads ordered you, *seriously*," Diddy told them earnestly, still pointing at them. "Now I think I understand where so much evil comes from in all of you."

"Yeah, yeah, of course, now just put those guns down and-"

"And you know something?" Dixie interrupted, also speaking to them seriously. "I'm really, really sorry that you had to be born and raised in an environment like this, believe me."

Suddenly, Jemky's quartet began to pick up pace, so Diddy and Dixie became more tense.

"Now! Hold on tight, you all!" Dixie hurried to whisper to Jenny's quartet and Diddy. "Let's jump right now!"

Immediately, Jenny's quartet and Diddy held together next to Dixie and, acting quickly and pulling them all to the edge of the building, they dropped backwards just before Jemky's quartet caught them, all staying together.

"*CATCH US!*" Diddy shouted as soon as they jumped down.

The herd of animals was surprised at the sudden fall of the group, although luckily, Dixie made a huge effort and began to spin her hair as fast as she could to cushion the fall, keeping them all in the air inches away from the animals being able to reach them to help them down one by one... Finally, all six had been caught by the animals and were now all complete.

"DARN MONKEYS! YOU'RE GOING TO PAY US!" Jemky's quartet shouted at them from above.

"W-what?!" the animals exclaimed, somewhat confused. "Weren't those kids left?"

"Those are the hateful kids from our school; don't listen to them!" Diddy replied hurriedly.

"Well, we're all here," Dixie added in the same way. "Let's go! Quick, to the ship everyone!"

"Hey, what about those guns?!" one of the lions asked Diddy and Dixie, showing nervousness as the rest of the animals.

"We took them away from those four kids," Diddy replied. "We'll take them with us just in case."

Then, Diddy and Dixie went with Jenny's quartet and the animals to the ship, which was now next to another ship that seemed to be of the animals... although the latter had the appearance of having been built in an improvised way; its appearance looked more like a boat than a ship.

"Will you go on the other ship or how?!" Dixie asked.

"It would be fair," one of the elephants replied. "You go on yours with the children and Mr. Pinky. We'll go on the one we came on. Don't worry, it'll hold up very well."

Without having more time to think, everyone began to embark on their respective ships and prepared everything to be able to set sail, but not before Dixie passed by collecting the emerald she had thrown to put it back under her beret. Then, Dixie joined Diddy towards the ship where they were going to go. The herd of kong children, Mr. Pinky and Jenny's quartet were in the same ship as Diddy and Dixie... as if now they were really going to use the ship they built together.

"Uhh..." Dixie said as she stood in front of the helm with Diddy. "W-what is done here?!"

"Right, we have to raise the anchor," Diddy replied, patting his own head. "We have to locate it... Oh, and this ship has three ones."

Both headed towards the other end of the ship, where they would find a wheel that held the anchor rope of the ship. Diddy and Dixie knew the whole ship perfectly with all the information that Jenny's quartet had given them... or rather, Jemky's, when they were building it. But when trying to turn the wheel between the two, it did not turn and seemed to be stuck.

"Oh, no!" Dixie said after struggling to turn the wheel.

"What if we pull it from the bottom of the water?" Diddy hurriedly suggested. "Mr. Pinky or the animals could help us."

Without thinking further, they both resorted to asking the other animals present for help...

Chapter 73: On the High Seas

On the other hand, on the stairs of the building, Jemky's quartet was descending at full speed and with elongated steps with their four limbs, almost throwing themselves off the steps and heading towards the second floor.

"Those dumb monkeys don't have to get away with it this time!" Jemky exclaimed as they went down. "They have everyone out there and they're going to take them away! We must notify our dads! And getting other guns!... And hopefully they won't punish us!"

"Wait, wait!" Rocky exclaimed, stopping abruptly and stopping the other kids. "We can't go to our dads! We were told to stay hidden!"

"Hey, don't tell me you believed that pair of fools that those circus tamers are with them?"

"Oh, of course not!" Rocky replied. "But maybe they'll punish us because we didn't hide. I think we should just go to get more guns and go out and face that pair of dumb monkeys."

"Those two have guns too; they took them from us!" Mandrew replied. "They have Mr. Pinky and Jenny's in their orders, and those animals too, that I don't even know how they got here!"

"But our dads won't even want to listen to us!" Rocky contradicted. "They'll blame us first! Besides, we don't even know what kind of bosses they were talking about"

"Well, we're going to keep wasting time if we keep going like this!" Melenky interrupted. "Let's just go with our dads!"

"Yeah, let's just go, we'll explain to them quickly," Jemky added, giving the other three kids little pushes.

The four kids resumed the way normally, except for Rocky, who was only rolling his eyes and insisting on changing their minds, but the other kids didn't listen to him. The quartet continued to run at speed, this time through the corridors and toward the laboratory, where the apes could be found.

"Look, there they come!" Jemky exclaimed when, at the end of the corridor where they were, the apes came running in a hurry. "Quick, let's explain"

"B-but what the heck are you doing here?!" the lead orangutan exclaimed as he saw them approaching, though this time, he spoke in a stealthy, desperate tone. *"Go hide, for all the holy apes!"* he added, giving them small pushes in such a desperate way.

"But why?!" Jemky replied in opposition. "We have to inform you some"

"JUST GET OUT OF HERE, DARN IT!" one of the mandrills added. *"You can't be seen by"*

Suddenly, the four children looked up at the moment when three tall silhouettes were right behind the apes.

"Useless apes!" the tamers exclaimed by surprise, pulling the apes by the ears. *"RIGHT NOW, YOU GO-"*

Suddenly, the group of tamers was shocked and confused when they realized the presence of the four children... as if they had never seen them before. But at the same time, the apes showed themselves as if they had gone blank for a few seconds, and then hurriedly took the quartet in their arms, and kept them clinging to them as if they wanted to hide them while looking at the tamers. That seemed to be confusing Jemky and company.

"D-dad, w-what's going on?" Jemky stammered as he was held by the lead orangutan. "W-who are they?"

"Wait a moment..." the one-eyed tamer said. *"And those four little ones... Who are they?"*

"Darn, I think let's run right now," the blue-lapel mandrill muttered under his breath, while holding Mandrew.

"Wait a minute!" the tamer of the prosthetic leg exclaimed with a stern look.

Suddenly, the man approached the apes and observed them in a meticulous way, especially the quartet. The apes clung even more to their respective children, *as if they wanted to protect them*, while they had an apparently frightened look towards the three tamers.

"Let's get out of here, darn it," the brown-lapel mandrill whispered, holding Rocky. *"They're looking at the boys."*

"But who are they?!" Melenky replied, raising his voice, before his respective father closed his muzzle.

"Don't talk, please, don't talk!" the red-lapel mandrill whispered.

"Wait a minute!" the one-eyed tamer exclaimed, beginning to look angry. "An orangutan, a mandrill... a red-shanked langur and a... capuchin monkey?... Are they..."

"It can't be! It's not possible!" the one-armed tamer added with an expression of sternness towards the apes. "Are those the last baby apes we *asked you to get rid of?!"*

"They're the ones, right?!" the one-eyed tamer added, raising his voice more. *"They must be them!"*

The three tamers began to try to take Jemky and company from the arms of the apes, but the latter refused and immediately put themselves in a protective position.

"W-What are these men talking about?!" Jemky asked, beginning to look frightened and confused.

"D-don't worry, son, I won't let you! We'll protect you all!" the lead orangutan said before the one-eyed tamer tried to snatch Jemky from him. *"Don't be afraid; here we-"*

"Stay still, darn ape!" the one-eyed tamer exclaimed, as he struggled to take Jemky.

The tamers were trying to snatch the apes' children, but the apes wouldn't allow them and protected the quartet with all their might, even the black-lapel orangutan who, despite holding none, helped

protect them all too. Meanwhile, Jemky and company had no idea what was happening and even began to be afraid of those words mentioned by the tamers.

Suddenly, the one-eyed tamer managed to give the lead orangutan a strong push to the floor and, before he got up, he reached to take Jemky by his hair locks and lifted him into the air.

"But they are definitely the same *baby apes that remained*," the tamer said, looking at Jemky menacingly, while Jemky looked at him in fear and in turn tried to hit him but it was in vain. "They have the *same face*," he added before yelling at the apes. "*How could you fool us for so long?! WE TOLD YOU TO GET RID OF THEM?! WE DON'T WANT TO SEE ANY BRAT APES WITH YO-*"

Suddenly, the lead orangutan, along with the other orangutan, lunged at the tamer and gave him a couple of hits to make him release Jemky, the latter immediately went along and gave another to the tamer by survival instinct. Then, the lead orangutan managed to get Jemky back.

"*Let's leave, let's leave, we have no choice!*" the orangutan exclaimed, pushing the other apes.

The group of apes, holding the quartet of kids, began to flee from the tamers as fast as they could. Along the way, they lifted the quartet on their backs so that they could use all four limbs and run faster.

"*HEY!*" the one-eyed tamer shouted at them before they started running after them. "*COME BACK HERE, YOU DARN APES!*"

The apes carried the quartet on their backs as they turned through different corridors to lose sight of the tamers.

"W-what is all this?!" Jemky insisted as he was on the back of the lead orangutan. "We need an explanation!"

"Silence, please, boys!" the orangutan replied as they looked at which corridor to run.

It took a couple of minutes until the apes stopped in a corner of the stairwell room, and made sure that there was no presence of the group of tamers. The five apes were breathing heavily and maintained frightened expressions, *never before seen in them*.

"Hey!" Rocky exclaimed quietly as he climbed down from his father's back and the other three kids did the same. "What the heck is going on here?" he added, looking uncertainly at the apes.

"W-why did those men say that they w-wanted you to g-get rid of us?" Melenky asked hurriedly and fearfully at the same time.

"*And why the heck did you come looking for us?!*" the lead orangutan reproached the quartet, raising his voice, although it was rather a tone of despair.

"But tell us what's going on with those men!" Mandrew replied.

"*Urgh, now is not a good time to explain!*" the apes replied. "*We told you to hide-*"

"They're circus tamers, aren't they?!" Jemky interrupted, looking at them extremely seriously.

The five apes made a shocked gesture at what Jemky had just asked them, but almost instantly, they were desperate again.

"W-what did you say, boy?!" the lead orangutan asked, his hands on his head and in a tone of despair. "H-how do you know?"

"It can't be!" Rocky interrupted in the same way as Jemky. "So, it's true?! Do you have anything to do with those tamer-"

"Where did you guys get that?!" one of the mandrills asked them.

"That's what that pair of monkeys told us!" Jemky hastened to reply. "By the way, those two-"

"How did those two brat monkeys know-"

"Let me explain!" Jemky interrupted, speaking quickly. "We came to tell you that those two monkeys *have just escaped!* They came out through that top-floor duct, they got the Jennies, Mr. Pinky, and all those kids out of here too!"

"WHAT?!"

"And not only that!" Rocky added in the same way. "They also have a herd of animals that I think were *from the same circus of those tamers!*"

"W-what what...?!" the apes stammered, all showing a face of wanting to explode like never before. "What did you... just say?!"

"That we have to go stop that pair of dumb monkeys before they take them all away!" Jemky replied. "They're even embarking right now!"

"AHHH! DARN IT ALL!" the apes grumbled so furious that they even frightened the quartet a little. "DARN IT! WHAT THE HECK DID THAT PAIR OF DARN MONKEYS DO?!"

"We have to go stop them!" Rocky added. "Those monkeys are getting away with it-"

"Now I do want that pair dead!" the lead orangutan interrupted very furiously. "*I WANT THEM DEAD! We're tired of those brats taking us for fools!*"

"And let's go quick!" one of the mandrills added. "If the bosses find out, we'll be the ones who will be dead!"

Meanwhile, Diddy and Dixie were finishing raising the second anchor of the ship, and Mr. Pinky was helping them; it was difficult but, in the end, they managed to do it. Also, some of the circus animals were finishing tying some ropes on their ship and then also tying them to Diddy and Dixie's. Finally, the animals took out some oars they had brought with them, and began to try to take their ship in front of the other one so that they could tie more ropes. For their part, Diddy and Dixie were now on the deck of the ship, waiting for everything to be ready so they could set sail. Jenny's quartet and Mr. Pinky were with them too, while they preferred to keep the herd of kong children inside the cabins.

"I hope we can arrive safely," Dixie said worriedly as she looked into the cave where they were going to pass to get out of that islet.

"We will get out of here, Dixie. This time for sure," Diddy said, placing a hand on her shoulder and giving a short smile. "The good thing is that we're already all together outside that building."

"Hey!" one of the animals called them from the other ship, to which Diddy and Dixie peeked out to see them. "Take these! We have some for you too!" they added before extending a couple of oars.

Diddy and Dixie were confused for a couple of seconds, but then they took the oars that the animals were handing them, who then handed them another pair of oars.

"Hey, friends!" one of the animals said, peeking overboard of their ship. "Do you know something? Recently we saw about three silhouettes enter the building."

"Yeah, they were wearing dark cloaks," another of the animals added with some trepidation. "We didn't know what those guys were, but they came on that weird boat over there," he said, pointing in a direction.

The animals pointed to what appeared to be a luxurious-looking yacht and quite advanced for their vision. Diddy and Dixie knew clearly who the animals were talking about, but were a little hesitant to tell them, as that might upset them.

"Hey... In fact, *we do know* who those ones you mention are," Diddy told them with some insecurity. "We saw their faces."

"What are you saying?! And who could those individuals be? More of those bad apes?"

"No, no, no!" Dixie hurried to answer them. "They were *the circus tamers!* And I think this is all *their plan!*"

"WHAAAT?!"

The whole herd of animals made a gesture of absolute shock and fear at once, even those who were tying the ropes between the two ships. Everyone began to murmur and look at each other scandalized at what Diddy and Dixie told them.

"What did you just say?!"

"Sure enough! It's those tamers!" Diddy replied. "We hear them say that *they are the ones* who want all those kids turned into mechanical apes!"

"It can't be! *Those darn ones!*" one of the animals exclaimed and then the rest murmured similar phrases.

"*They hadn't been locked up in jail?!*" another of the animals added. "*Did they escape or were they released?!*"

"We don't know, honestly!" Dixie replied.

"No way! *We must do something about it!*" another of the animals exclaimed, showing some firmness. "*I suggest we go give those tamers their comeuppance right now! After all, THEY OWE US!*"

Suddenly, the herd of animals began to murmur louder and to show an attitude of wanting to fight and get off the ship, even if it was no longer on the shore, so Diddy and Dixie had to intervene.

"Hey, no, no, no! What are you talking about?!" Diddy exclaimed in despair. "I mean, it's a terrible idea to enter that building right now! If any of those evil beings manage to see you, they'll mercilessly exterminate you all... What's more, we must hurry before they come out and see us here!"

The animals were not so convinced now that they wanted to leave without having made some "settling of accounts", but Diddy and Dixie continued to insist that the only option they had was to flee from that place, since it was extremely risky for everyone to go and fight those tamers; they could not even go against the apes, since they were immune to attack at the time. Without having more time to think about it, the animals had finished tying the ropes between the two ships, and now they would be ready to set sail. All that remained was to raise an anchor from the ship where Diddy and Dixie were.

"Hey, look!" one of the animals exclaimed, pointing in the direction of the building.

Diddy and Dixie turned to see what the animals were pointing to... When suddenly, their eyes were opened to the maximum when they saw among the vegetation five large and four small primate silhouettes coming out of the building, who had what seemed to be flashlights in hand and as if they were looking for something in the direction of the water.

"Oh, no, here they come!" Diddy exclaimed desperately, trying not to sound so loud. "Quick, quick! The other anchor!"

Diddy and Dixie headed towards a wheel that raised the anchor, which was the last one they needed to set sail. Mr. Pinky also joined in to help them, and then Jenny's quartet joined in to cooperate as well.

"You guys start rowing now!" Dixie told the circus animals, who were in the ship in front of them.

Some of the animals took some oars and began to use them to be able to accelerate as soon as possible. Meanwhile, Diddy and Dixie along with Mr. Pinky and Jenny's quartet were already turning the anchor wheel and, a few seconds later, the ships began to set sail, which generated a small smile to both for a second.

"There they go! There are those brat monkeys!" a voice was heard in the distance.

Diddy and Dixie immediately looked at where the voices were coming from and, as if obstacles couldn't end, it was the group of apes and Jemky's quartet heading towards them, illuminating them with their flashlights... and all with guns in hand.

"Oh, no, no, they *saw us!*" Diddy exclaimed, panicking.

"The guns!" Dixie said hurriedly. "Let's take up the guns, there is no other choice!"

Diddy and Dixie rushed to grab the weapons they had taken from Jemky's quartet, and peeked overboard to aim at the band of apes.

"They have guns!" the lead orangutan exclaimed in the distance. *"Open fire too!"*

The apes along with the quartet began to aim at Diddy and Dixie as well, so instantly, both did not hesitate to open fire and shoot as they could at the entire band of apes, including Jemky's quartet.

Diddy and Dixie managed to shoot them and knock down a pair of mandrills, but likewise, the apes were starting to shoot too, so Diddy and Dixie immediately ducked and tried to hide for protection.

"DUCK DOWN TOO!" Dixie ordered the herd of animals that, although they were in the front ship, could be at risk of being hit by the projectiles.

"Don't be afraid! We'll solve it!" Diddy yelled at them. *"Keep rowing!"*

The animals kept their heads and torsos down as some of them shivered amid the shooting. Likewise, they continued rowing to be able to go towards the cave where they would leave.

"Mr. Pinky, help us!" Diddy ordered. "Take a gun and shoot all those evil apes!"

"The Jennies too!" Dixie added. "Take the other gun and shoot them! And stand in front of us!"

After that, Diddy and Dixie got up again with guns in hand and continued shooting at the apes and bully children. The immunity effect in the apes seemed to be still in place, as the two mandrills, who had been shot, were back on their feet. Anyway, Diddy and Dixie remained firm in their goal of escaping from that place, and repeatedly shot the whole band of apes, being helped by Mr. Pinky and, although it still seemed somewhat cruel, shielding themselves by the quartet of mechanical children, who were in front of Diddy and Dixie receiving one or another shot, but getting up immediately.

"AHHH, DARN IT!" the lead orangutan shouted. *"THAT DARN PAIR OF-"*

Diddy and Dixie managed to shoot him before he continued. Finally, they had managed to take down the whole gang, including the bully children; the nine apes were lying motionless on the ground. Diddy and Dixie were breathing heavily, but they were somewhat relieved at once. On the other hand, some of the circus animals peeked out again from their ship to look at the scene, to which Diddy and Dixie signaled victory and to continue rowing. In fact, they were already entering the cave where they would come out.

Suddenly, Diddy and Dixie managed to see that one of the apes was moving again, so they rushed to shoot him again until he was motionless, and so they continued a while longer to prevent the band of apes from chasing them.

"I think that's enough!" Diddy hurriedly exclaimed. "Let's go! We have to help row too!"

The animals' ship was already inside the cave, so Diddy and Dixie went to take the oars and invited Mr. Pinky and Jenny's quartet to do the same with the extra oars. Both began rowing so they could accelerate faster and keep up with the animals' ship. Then, Diddy went to the helm so that he could also steer the ship towards the cave and avoid colliding with the rocky walls.

"Let's go! We have to enter through this cave!" Dixie pointed out to Mr. Pinky and the mechanical children, who were also rowing. "We're almost done, almost-"

"BUT WHAT THE HECK?!" a voice different from all the crew of both ships exclaimed...

Everyone turned to look at where that voice had come from, which in fact... *was not from the apes either*. To their surprise, it was none other than the *tamers*, who were a few meters from the water's edge and illuminating them all with flashlights.

"It can't be!" the one-eyed tamer exclaimed, shining the lantern on them. *"IT'S THOSE TWO MONKEYS! But it's that pair of mischievous and disastrous monkeys!"*

"But what the heck are they doing around here?!" the one-armed tamer added. *"HOW COME THEY GOT INTO THIS PLACE?!"*

Diddy and Dixie panicked immediately as they continued to steer the ship and almost lost focus.

"THE TAMERS! There are those three darned ones!" one of the animals exclaimed along with the rest. *"Let's beat them up-"*

"NO!" Dixie interrupted, regaining concentration and looking sideways at the tamers. *"Don't worry, we'll take over it!"*

Dixie left the oar on the deck of the ship and signaled to Diddy; he caught the idea immediately and went along.

"It can't be!" the tamer of the prosthetic leg exclaimed, focusing on Jenny's quartet. *"THEY HAVE THE FIRST FOUR CHIMPANZEES WE HAD MECHANIZED! WHAT THE HECK?!"*

"AND WAIT A MINUTE!" the one-eyed tamer interrupted, this time focusing towards the ship of the animals. *"What is a herd of animals doing there... OH, NO, NO, NO!"*

"AREN'T OUR CIRCUS ANIMALS?!" the one-armed tamer added showing shock and furious at the same time.

"Hey, and that gorilla over there?!" the prosthetic leg tamer added, focusing on Mr. Pinky. *"DON'T TELL ME THAT IT'S-"*

Suddenly, Diddy and Dixie peeked overboard, pointing guns at the tamers... whom they did not hesitate for a second to start shooting. But the tamers reacted as soon as they saw them, and hid behind some trees nearby. Diddy and Dixie barely managed to shoot at the cloaks worn by the tamers; they both wanted to get off to fight them, but it was too late and the ship had already moved far enough from the shore... They were even entering more towards the cave, so they had to retake control of the ship.

"Urgh, well!" Dixie grumbled in frustration at not being able to defeat them. *"We must get out of here!"*

Both ships were finally inside the cave, so they would finally be on their way out. The animals, Diddy, Dixie, and company continued to concentrate on steering the ships through the cave. The water seemed to be somewhat swift, which made it a little difficult for them to accelerate, but anyway, they did not lose the impulse of wanting to leave that place.

"There they go! We have to catch them! Let's go!" the tamers were heard so far in the distance.

Diddy and Dixie had to resist the urge to fight them, so they didn't care what they said.

"We're almost out! Just a little more!" one of the animals announced.

The cave was quite dark, but a while later, some light was starting to come in, which meant they were about to get out. Until a couple of minutes later... the animals' ship had already gone outside the cave and, a few more oars, the ship where Diddy and Dixie were going was leaving too.

"We did it! We're doing it!" Diddy exclaimed as he continued to steer the helm.

A while later... *they finally had all gone out to sea*. Rowing was even feeling more lightly in doing so, and now they were sailing as they should. Even so... the sea was quite rough and there was a cold wind, beside a thick fog that was around, but the good news was that finally... *they had gotten out of all that islet!*

"*WE DID IT!*" the animals exclaimed, making gestures of victory among all.

"*We're finally out of that place!*" Diddy exclaimed, turning to the others, leaping with excitement, with a joy he hadn't had for quite some time.

"*We're out! We did it!*" Dixie added, starting to smile really again, jumping around too, and then ran to hug Diddy with excitement.

"*We did it!*" Diddy exclaimed, hugging Dixie tightly as well. "*I knew we could! We did it!*"

They both broke away from the embrace, and then ran to hug the kids from Jenny's quartet and waved each one's shoulders with excitement, as if for a moment they were returning to the time where they were their friends. Likewise, they ran to embrace Mr. Pinky with all the excitement and relief they felt at that moment... Although as expected, Mr. Pinky and the mechanical children did not seem to understand the situation. Anyway, Diddy and Dixie were still victorious to have made it and even wanted to go celebrate with the animals, but they could not because they were in the other ship. Even so, they made gestures of victory from a distance and they returned them.

"Hey!" Dixie called the animals from her ship. "We truly... thank you for helping us," she added, smiling more calmly.

"Yeah, it wouldn't have been possible without you," Diddy added in the same way, before lowering his expression. "Uhh, and sorry for... have made you all come here; I really didn't know how dangerous it was."

"Oh, no, don't worry," one of the animals replied, smiling at them in the distance. "You helped us once... You saved our lives, in fact. How could we not?"

Suddenly, a wave that had been forming in the middle of the sea, splashed both ships and some of the crew of the same, making them cough and rub their eyes immediately.

"Oh, the tide is very strong!" one of the animals said, shaking his fur.

"It's that... it seems that there are swells here," Diddy said, recovering. "It wasn't like this when we came."

Suddenly, Diddy and Dixie noticed Jenny's quartet, who were with expressions of getting lost and were beginning to convulse a little until they lay on the deck of the ship.

"Oh, no! The Jennies!" Dixie immediately exclaimed, running towards them along with Diddy. "No, no, no, water hurts them!"

Dixie grabbed Jenny by the head, who was lying on the deck and making rolling movements in her eyes as if losing control.

"No, Jenny, please!" Dixie exclaimed, waving her shoulders to get her to react. She then went to help Mandy, who was also rolling her pupils and convulsing mildly. "Mandy!"

"Ricky! Melvyn!" Diddy exclaimed, trying to help the two kong boys who also had certain convulsions until then they became motionless. "No, please, react! Don't die... Uhh, well, I mean... Don't get turned off!"

"Wait, Diddy! Mandy is coming back!" Dixie said again, smiling. "She's coming back!"

Then, Mandy had returned to normal eyes and was calm again, which brought a little relief to Diddy and Dixie.

"Look, Jenny got up!" Diddy told Dixie.

Suddenly, Jenny had stood up again and looked as if nothing had happened to her. Then, they also saw Ricky and Melvyn getting up and trying to regain their senses.

"They're all fine!" Diddy exclaimed with a relieved smile.

"I think they better go to the cabin with the other kids; they can be exposed here," Dixie said.

Diddy and Dixie took the arms of the four mechanical children and directed them into the ship's cabins. The four were reluctant to stay there, but Diddy and Dixie had to force them and then closed the door.

"Hey!" one of the animals exclaimed, to which Diddy and Dixie peeked overboard to see them. "If your friends are robots... how do they work? Is it true that they were real kids and they were turned into robots?!"

"Indeed," Diddy replied from a distance. "That group of cruel apes did that atrocity to them. And in fact, they were controlled by those bad kids from our school; *everything* they interacted with us on Hurricane Island was actually by those four fools. Now they move on their own because we discovered from those apes a method that revived them... I mean, it's not that it really revives them, but it gives them autonomy of their own."

"We read in the instructions that they can be taught things again," Dixie added. "That is, it's like they've been born again, that's why they don't speak... We just hope that at least it was a way to 'revive' them."

"Wow! We didn't know that; nothing like that ever crossed our minds," one of the animals commented. "So, they had been spying on you all along... And by the way, what about Mr. Pinky?"

"The apes wanted to make him a robot, too," Dixie replied. "When he had left Hurricane Island, those apes kidnapped him there and gave him a hypnotizing mixture, the same one they gave to all the children they had kidnapped... And that has erased all their consciousness."

"So, they won't get it back?!" the animals asked alarmed.

"We think there's a way; we hear it from those apes," Diddy replied. "Oh, and the last we hear about this whole situation is that those circus tamers are the masterminds, just as you heard from them recently. We didn't have any more time to find out, but it seems that those apes are actually henchmen of those tamers."

"Wait a minute!" Dixie exclaimed, somewhat pensively. "You see... Those apes used to kidnap animals of all kinds... I was also there along with my family, actually. And we always heard that those apes annihilated their victims and took their remains somewhere else that we never knew where it was... D-did they take them to those tamers?"

Diddy, Dixie, and the herd of animals looked at each other strangely and confusedly. The animals seemed to be increasingly horrified with the whole context of the situation.

"Wow, it might make sense," Diddy commented pensively. "But what would those tamers do with the animals' remains?... By the way, have you ever heard anything about that when you were at the zoo?" he asked the herd.

"We never heard anything like that," the animals replied. "Well, we only stayed locked up and barely went out for rehearsals and performances. We never saw any armed orangutan or mandrill there. Or maybe those tamers have mentioned it at some point, but we didn't give it importance."

"There has to be an explanation," Dixie said earnestly. "Oh, although it's already impossible and even dangerous to find out anyway-"

Suddenly, another large wave had formed and splashed water on everyone, even making both ships stagger.

"Oh, we must hurry! Let's go!" one of the animals exclaimed. "Let's row again!"

The animals returned to take the oars they had brought, and began to use them to avoid any wild waves that could cross around them. Diddy and Dixie, meanwhile, took the oars too and joined in the action. Mr. Pinky joined them afterwards too.

"Hey!" Diddy called the herd. "Do you know how to get to Hurricane Island?! Because the truth is that I can't navigate well with all this fog!"

"Of course! It's not that far away either!" one of the animals replied while rowing.

While it was true that they had finally managed to get out of that islet, the way to Hurricane Island looked increasingly complicated due to the riotous tide that was being witnessed, beside the thick fog that was beginning to make it difficult for them to see. Diddy and Dixie just begged that no major obstacle would present themselves in the way; they even remembered the time when they returned from the city to DK Island and were surprised by the storm; it would be quite catastrophic if something like that were to happen again along the way, because it would be in danger not only the lives of both, but also that of all the crew of both ships.

"We're going in the right direction, aren't we?!" Dixie asked as they rowed. "Because I can't see noth--"

Dixie could not continue because another wave had splashed on the ships. In fact, the ship they were on had had some rattles this time.

"Don't worry!" one of the animals said, calming them down. "We know the way! We'll be fine!"

Diddy and Dixie's temporary joy was turning back into worry upon they were going through a terrible weather situation that looked like putting them in danger. And it was not for less, because the ships were wobbling because of the waves that were forming continuously... They even seemed

to be on the rise. The thick fog that was there was also bothering them, in addition to the icy wind that was perceived in the area.

"Isn't the h-hurricane, is it?" Diddy asked, beginning to tremble and becoming worried.

"I-I hope not," Dixie said, rubbing her arms due to the cold. "The hurricane doesn't pass around here--"

"*HEY!*" one of the elephants in the herd interrupted, suddenly showing alarmed and pointing to the back of the ship where Diddy and Dixie were.

Diddy and Dixie immediately turned to look at where they were pointing... And what they saw triggered their panic again instantly.

"*No, no, no! It can't be!*" Diddy and Dixie exclaimed simultaneously, going into despair again. "*It can't be true!*"

"Is it those apes?!" one of the animals asked them.

"*The same ones!*" Diddy replied. "*And we'd better speed up if we want to live!*"

Unfortunately, behind the ships came another boat more... It was the band of evil apes with Jemky's quartet included. They came on what appeared to be a closed yacht, but with windows where they all could be seen and, of course, they all had guns in hand.

"*Urgh, when will we be calm?!*" Diddy grumbled, throwing his cap on the deck and then trampling on it.

"*Oh, well! Let's take up the guns!*" Dixie added hurriedly.

Both left the oars and ran to take up the weapons again to reload them. They also gave one to Mr. Pinky and ordered him to use it in case the apes were nearby.

"*Hey!*" Diddy called the animals. "*If gunfire starts happening, just duck and protect yourselves! Meanwhile, keep rowing as much as you can!*"

Diddy and Dixie were heading to the highest railing of the ship so they could aim at the apes... Although as they climbed the steps, the ship began to wobble again because it was on a wave forming, and then both fell backwards, while that wave was splashing them until they got completely wet. Even so, they immediately got up and resumed their way overboard.

Mr. Pinky, on the other hand, was also getting up, and then followed Diddy and Dixie to stay with them to confront the apes.

"Don't shoot yet; they're still inside!" Dixie told the teacher.

The small boat where the apes were going was also struggling with the wild waves that were around; in fact, it was having stronger capsizes due to its smaller size. Even so, this boat seemed to resist more due to its metallic materiality.

Diddy and Dixie kept crouching and pointing their guns at the apes at the same time... Although they clearly felt that the constant wobble of the ship was hindering their aim, as the boat was moving up and down continuously, making them lose their balance occasionally.

"They're going to aim at us! Watch out!" Dixie exclaimed, grabbing onto a railing with one hand and holding the gun with the other.

For their part, the apes were opening some windows on the roof of their yacht, through which they were peeking up to half of their bodies and with weapons in hand... Although they were also having difficulty keeping their balance and fell between times.

"Oh, darn it!" one of the apes complained, climbing back up the skylight. "It seems that the hurricane is in its last phase and has reached here!"

"Those monkeys are over there!" another one added, pointing toward Diddy and Dixie's ship. "And look! They're very funny thinking they're going to shoot us like that!"

"Hey!" Melenky said, looking through the windows inside. "*Aren't those tamers?!*"

"*What did you say, boy?!*" the lead orangutan exclaimed, running to look where Melenky was.

For better or worse for the apes... further back from the yacht, they reached to see *another* boat, similar to that of the apes, and where inside they could see nothing more and nothing less than the group of *circus tamers*... with guns in hand too.

"*NO, DARN IT!*" the lead orangutan exclaimed, in despair. "*There they come!*"

"*Really?!*" one of the mandrills exclaimed in the same way.

"*Well, we have to explain to them that those two little monkeys are taking those kids away then!*" the other orangutan added. "*So, we'll defeat them together!*"

"*Yes, but what about the boys?!*" the lead orangutan replied. "*We have to hide them!*"

"*Hey, no!*" Jemky exclaimed in opposition. "*We want to fight that pair of dumb monkeys too!*"

"*But those human men don't want to see you four!*" one of the mandrills replied.

"*But why?!*" Rocky insisted. "*And what have we done to those tamers?! We don't even know them-*"

"*This is no time for explanations!*" the lead orangutan replied. "*Now you'd better stay-*"

"*NO, darn it!*" Jemky interrupted firmly. "*You always hide things from us! We've had enough of being kept like this by you! WE'VE HAD ENOUGH-*"

"*Beware those tones of voice!*" the lead orangutan interrupted, pulling Jemky by the ear. "*And we don't have time now to scold you. Especially you! Because of your childishness in separating that pair of brat monkeys, we've ended up here.*"

"*Hey, but we're going to fight alongside you against those two monkeys anyways!*" Mandrew added in kind.

Suddenly, Mandrew climbed back up to the skylight, and the other three children went along to climb up as well.

"*HEY, NO! WAIT A MOMENT!*" the apes exclaimed, trying to stop them but it was too late.

Jemky and company were already standing on the deck of the yacht, all with guns trying to aim at Diddy and Dixie in the distance, not caring about the wild tide that made the yacht stagger and the waves that splashed them continuously.

For their part, Diddy and Dixie, and even Mr. Pinky, were attentive to the movements of the band of apes, and were pointing at the quartet too, despite the fact that both the waves and the fog, the wind and the wobbling of the ship were making it difficult for them to aim.

Suddenly, the bully boys began to open fire and unleashed a couple of shots towards Diddy and Dixie's ship, so these two ducked instantly, but then got up and released a few shots towards the quartet too.

"Shoot, Mr. Pinky!" Diddy ordered in the middle of the shooting.

Suddenly, an exchange of fire had begun between the two boats. Diddy and Dixie were crouching or even hiding behind Mr. Pinky, and then peek out again to continue shooting. The tension in both increased when they saw the group of adult mandrills and orangutans on the deck of the yacht and they began to shoot them as well.

"GUYS, DUCK DOWN!" Dixie ordered the herd of animals in the middle of the confrontation.

For its part, the herd of animals was also tense. They kept rowing as fast and focused as they could, even though they were quite nervous about the shots that flew above the boats. From time to time, they would peek out to look at Diddy and Dixie as if they wanted to make sure they were both fine.

"Oh, no, no, no!" Diddy exclaimed before desperately pointing in a direction. *"It can't be!"*

"Urgh, no! Why?!" Dixie added in the same tone.

Diddy and Dixie, in the middle of the fog, had now noticed that the group of tamers was coming in the distance on another closed yacht... and they seemed to handle the yacht at a higher speed, although there was the advantage that the waves made it difficult for it to accelerate too.

"Don't worry, we just have to keep them all away," Diddy told Dixie, trying to stand firm in the face of the situation. "Maybe those tamers aren't even immunized."

Suddenly, the group of apes had executed a shot in the direction of the ship where Diddy and Dixie were, but they immediately crouched down and then also returned the shots along with Mr. Pinky. Although for good or bad luck, the projectiles did not seem to represent a danger, since no group managed to hit the shots because the strong movement of the waves and the wind only made them deviate considerably. Even the waves seemed to take more and more strength and made the boats stagger abruptly. Large waves began to form, which caused the ship where Diddy and Dixie were to rise and fall suddenly until the water splashed them to spread over the entire deck of the ship.

"I can't... aim at them well!" Dixie exclaimed as she held tightly to the ship's railings, this time with both hands.

From a distance, they could see that the group of apes was having the same problems... and they even kept holding on to some parts of the yacht's deck while the waves used to cover the entire boat. At that point, everyone seemed to have abandoned the action, and now they only concentrated on being able to maintain balance on the decks of their respective boats.

"Oh, no! I can't anymore!" Diddy exclaimed, holding onto the railings as well. *"I just want to get to dry lan-"*

Diddy could not finish the sentence because another wave had splashed on them, this time covering even the highest railings of the ship. The waves seemed to have gotten wilder that was even affecting the herd of animals to be able to row; some of them had to give priority to holding on to their ship so as not to lose their balance or fall into the water. The waves were becoming more and more repetitive and the wind was also getting stronger.

"HEY!" the animals called Diddy and Dixie. *"HOLD ON TIGHT! WE CAN'T ROW WELL NOW!"*

Suddenly, Diddy and Dixie's ship was starting to crash into the animals' one, causing some of them to hit a little with each impact.

"Oh, no! It can't be!" Dixie exclaimed, clinging to the railings of the ship. *"And the children! How could they be right now?!"*

"We can't get them out!" Diddy replied, clinging to the railings too and with the wind in his face.

Diddy and Dixie didn't know what further actions to take at that time. Even Mr. Pinky seemed to fear for his life as if he were in his five senses; he was clinging to the railings too. The tension increased when they began to hear creaks in the wood of the ship, as if it was going to collapse at any moment. In the distance, they also saw the yachts where the apes and tamers came; all of them were already inside these and they could see how the waves passed over them until they were submerged in the water and expelled abruptly.

Suddenly, Diddy and Dixie could hear the creaking of a door. As they turned to look, they realized that Jenny's quartet had left the cabin as if they wanted to know what was happening.

"Hey, no!" Dixie said. *"Go back inside! You're going to get hurt here!"*

Diddy and Dixie headed to try to stop the mechanical children, but they had already scattered across the deck of the ship before they both arrived. The four of them were running across the deck at the same time as the ship wobbled and made them fall and roll.

"No, go back inside, please!" Diddy ordered, but the four kids ignored him.

Jenny's quartet seemed to be taking it as a game, as if they believed the constant wobbling of the boat was something amusing.

"Stop, please!" Dixie exclaimed.

The waves were getting stronger, to the point that they even hindered everyone's ability to walk properly when one of them passed over the deck. Even Jenny's quartet was affected by the water when a wave covered them, making them convulse for a while, but recovering after a few seconds. For their part, Diddy and Dixie were attached to the railings of the ship while trying to keep their balance.

"Oh, no! What is that?!" Diddy exclaimed, pointing in a direction suddenly.

Suddenly, a small metal object appeared on the railing of the ship and seemed to have caught on it.

"Oh, no, no, no!" Dixie exclaimed, panicking when she saw what it was. That object appeared to be a hook.

Suddenly, some primate silhouettes began to climb behind the railings until they reached the deck of the ship, and put Diddy and Dixie on high alert: it was nothing more and nothing less than the band of evil apes, including the bully kids, who had arrived on their yacht to the large ship and in which they had hooked up.

"*HERE THEY ARE!*" one of the apes said, finishing climbing to the deck.

Diddy and Dixie immediately panicked and started running to the highest area of the deck, even if they slipped on the way.

"*STOP THERE, YOU BRAT MONKEYS!*" another ape yelled at them, before starting to fire shots into the air, but luckily, they did not hit them both due to the movement of the ship. "*WE'VE HAD ENOUGH OF YOU, YOU PAIR OF DISASTROUS!*"

Diddy and Dixie managed to hide behind other higher railings, while their palpitations accelerated to the extreme and they thought about what to do. Then, both of them more calmly reloaded their guns, hoping they hadn't run out of ammunition this time.

On the other hand, Mr. Pinky along with Jenny's quartet began to pounce on the band of apes to try to attack them, as if they had no consequences.

"*GET OUT OF THE WAY!*" one of the apes exclaimed, trying to push them all away, but they refused to leave them.

Suddenly, the lead orangutan grabbed Mr. Pinky by the hood abruptly to speak to him.

"*AND YOU, STUPID PINKY!*" the orangutan shouted at him. "*WHY THE HECK DO YOU ALLY YOURSELF WITH THAT PAIR OF BRATS?! NOT EVEN HYPNOTIZED YOU STOP BEING A TRAITOR AS YOU ALWAYS WER-*"

Suddenly, Mr. Pinky gave a single blow to the orangutan, knocking him down instantly. Then, the rest of the band of apes went to defend the orangutan and attack the teacher, but he rushed to activate his gun and began shooting any of the apes. Then, one of the bully boys started shooting Mr. Pinky, being later stopped by Jenny and company.

Diddy and Dixie were no longer so worried about the projectiles that the teacher or the mechanical children might receive, but even so, they knew that they had to do something to get the whole band of apes out of there. Both, in the midst of the ship's wobbling, got up and were going to join the fight. When suddenly, Jemky and company appeared to them in front, pointing their guns at them. But instantly, Diddy and Dixie rushed to shoot the four of them without thinking any longer, leaving them lying on the deck.

"Come on, we have to go for the apes now!" Diddy exclaimed.

Both went down again and in a single jump to the main deck of the ship, and were reunited with the group of apes, who were already waiting for them with guns in hand.

"*YOU'LL PAY US THIS TIME, YOU DARN MON-*"

Immediately, Diddy and Dixie went ahead to shoot them as well until they were completely knocked down and motionless, swallowing all the guilt for having done it this time.

"We have to take the guns away from them first!" Diddy exclaimed, all agitated. "Quick, before they get up again!"

"Mr. Pinky! And the four of you! Help us take away their weapons!" Dixie told the others.

Diddy and Dixie went to Jemky's quartet, who were still lying motionless on the deck, and snatched the guns they were carrying. On the other hand, Mr. Pinky along with Jenny's quartet proceeded to do the same with the mandrills and orangutans. Then, Diddy and Dixie took those weapons too and placed them all in a corner of the ship, even if they struggled to keep their balance to move.

"What do we do with all these weapons?!" Dixie asked, her arms full of guns.

"We just have to leave them out of reach of those ape--"

Suddenly, a strong wave splashed the entire ship and made Diddy and Dixie slip without being able to hold on in time because they carried all the weapons in their arms, even made them drop a couple of them, which they picked up as soon as they got back up.

"STAY STILL THERE, MONKEYS!" some children's voices behind exclaimed.

They both turned and saw that Jemky's quartet was already on their feet again and trying to catch them, but the continuous wobbling of the ship made it difficult for them to do so.

"Drop those guns!" the quartet ordered as they were holding on to the railings to be able to walk well.

Diddy and Dixie held the guns tightly, while also trying to hold on to the railings. The balance was already almost impossible to maintain in that position, so they had to think of quick actions.

"Let's throw them away, there's no other way!" Diddy whispered to Dixie.

"HEY, NO, WHAT THE HECK ARE YOU DOING?!" the quartet shouted at them.

Diddy and Dixie rushed to take all the weapons and throw them into the sea, finally managing to have empty hands to hold on.

"NOOO, YOU DARN MONKEYS!" Jemky shouted at them along with the other kids.

"LIKE OLD TIMES, YOU FOOLS!" Diddy replied mockingly.

"YOU'RE A STUPID MONKEY!" Rocky shouted.

Suddenly, Diddy and Dixie also saw the group of mandrills and orangutans starting to rise, even if their lying bodies had already moved all over the deck due to the wobbling.

"Oh, no, now what?!" Dixie asked desperately.

"We have to get them all out of here!" Diddy exclaimed.

Suddenly, they both felt that someone took their arms, it was the bully children, who began to attack them with blows. Instantly, Diddy and Dixie rushed to hit them back and join the fight, this time being hand-to-hand, like when it was dismissal time in Kong Kollege.

"Darn monkey!" Jemky exclaimed as he knocked Diddy against the deck and began to press his neck with his hands. *"Now I'm going to kill y-"* he added before Diddy returned a single kick back and managed to get up.

"I'm not afraid of you, you idiot!" Diddy exclaimed, lunging at him. *"Not any of you!"*

Mandrew rushed to attack Diddy, but Dixie came to defend him and began attacking Mandrew. Suddenly, Rocky and Melenky grabbed Dixie by the hair and started attacking her, but Diddy immediately lunged at them to make them let her go.

"Stupid monkeys!" Mandrew shouted, rushing to attack them both.

Immediately, Dixie hurriedly spun her hair to push them all away at once, but not before they got up again and lunged back at both. They all continued to fight at hand-to-hand, even if they didn't know exactly how it would all end. Diddy, on the other hand, didn't feel at all hesitant to fight the quartet like in Kong Kollege; this time he did attack them without fear of any consequences.

"Miserable monkeys!" Rocky shouted in the middle of the confrontation.

But suddenly, Diddy and Dixie were alerted the moment they saw the group of adult apes approaching them. Both were hesitant to fight those apes because of their size, so they opted to run away from the fight and try to run in another direction.

"STAY STILL, YOU BRATS!" the lead orangutan shouted at them. *"AND WHERE THE HECK ARE OUR WEAPONS?!"*

"The monkeys threw them into the sea!" Rocky said.

"WHAAAT?!" the apes exclaimed in great anger.

Diddy and Dixie set out to run all over the deck, fleeing from the group of apes. They didn't feel prepared enough to fight hand-to-hand against five large apes.

"DISASTROUS LITTLE IMPS!" the apes exclaimed as they went after them.

But later, Diddy and Dixie were panicking to see that they could only run in circles around the entire deck of the ship; they had no other route to take to have some safe escape. Meanwhile, the group of apes and the bully kids continued to chase them. When suddenly, Mr. Pinky joined the mechanical children to pounce on the nine evil primates, fighting hand-to-hand this time too.

"GET OFF, YOU NOSY!" Rocky exclaimed, trying to push them away along with the rest.

"These other four brats!" one of the mandrills added in the same way. *"And you, Pinky-"*

Diddy and Dixie, having hidden for a while behind some railings, watched the confrontation go, so they decided to join together as well. Both headed to the fight zone and began pouncing on any of the nine bad apes no matter who it was, turning into a seven-on-nine showdown.

"Darn monkeys!" the lead orangutan exclaimed. *"We've had enough of you!"*

Both continued fighting, pounced and even jumped on all the enemy apes, being also helped by Mr. Pinky and Jenny's quartet... But for bad luck, the ship was being lifted by a giant wave that made it land abruptly, and caused a large amount of water to envelop the ship and make them all lose their balance. Jenny's quartet was seriously affected after receiving water, so they began to convulse for a while. Suddenly, the apes got up again and headed towards Diddy and Dixie, so both rushed to flee again, since they barely had Mr. Pinky as reinforcement.

"Ahhh, what do we do now?!" Diddy asked as he ran.

The situation was too tense that Diddy and Dixie no longer knew how or when it would all end. Both continued to run all over the deck of the ship, trying not to collide with any of the enemies, beside they had to take care not to slip due to the wild movement of the waves.

Suddenly, Diddy and Dixie, after so many laps, were in the center of the ship and, to bad luck, the gang of apes had agreed to surround them from both directions and block their way.

"Let's go up!" Dixie whispered to Diddy.

Immediately, Dixie took Diddy's arm and started climbing up the main mast. Diddy was hesitant at first to follow her, but he barely had time to think, so he followed her anyway.

"COME BACK HERE, YOU PAIR OF BRATS!" all the apes shouted at them.

Not knowing what else to do, Diddy and Dixie reached the yards and stood there while desperately thinking about what action to take. The drawback was that the wind was getting stronger that was even making it a little difficult for them to see between times.

"Catch them!" the apes were heard saying.

Suddenly, the group of apes was climbing the ship's masts too to catch them, which made Diddy and Dixie more panicked.

"Don't let them escape!" the apes exclaimed.

Diddy and Dixie, seeing the enemy apes approaching, began to move through the rest of the sails, meshes and masts of the ship as if they were swinging on vines in the middle of the jungle. At the same time, the group of large apes and bully children began to do the same, and tried to block the way for both. Suddenly, Diddy was behind a sail and one of the mandrills appeared by surprise to try to catch him, but fortunately, Dixie managed to give the mandrill a push, making him fall towards the sails and rescuing Diddy in time. Then, both continued to move around the top of the ship, where Dixie even had to use her hair to have safe landings, while helping Diddy as well.

"We got you, you stupid monkeys!"

Unfortunately, the bully children had managed to catch them by surprise and kept them both cornered, being accompanied also by the adult mandrills and orangutans. Diddy and Dixie panicked as the nine enemy apes had them surrounded on one of the high-altitude sails. The large apes pinned them both against the mast with their hands, as if they wanted to choke them.

"Darn brat monkeys!" the lead orangutan said, holding them. *"Maybe our bosses will kill us all soon, but not before we finish you two off! WE'VE HAD ENOUGH! WE'RE TIRED OF YOU ALWAYS RUINING EVERYTHING TO US! EVERYTHING, DARN IT!"*

Suddenly, Dixie gathered her strength and began to kick the orangutan continuously, causing him to step back and allowing her to use her hair to attack, thus managing to make them release Diddy as well. Then, both hurried to push them all to make them fall through the sails, and afterwards they climbed down the masts to reach the lower sails. But unfortunately, the apes landed on the same sail too and cornered them again... When suddenly...

"STOP THERE, YOU MALEVOLENT APES!" a voice different from everyone involved in the fight exclaimed.

When they all turned to look, they realized that it was the circus animals who were moving from their ship to the other one, and were coming in the direction of the mast where Diddy, Dixie and the whole band of apes were.

"Urgh, what do those dumb animals think?!" the lead orangutan exclaimed.

Diddy and Dixie were scared to see the entire herd of animals heading towards them, but this time, they had no problem at all, as at least none of the apes were armed now.

"LEAVE OUR MONKEY FRIENDS ALONE!" the animals shouted at them the moment they arrived.

Suddenly, the animals, although they had heavier and larger bodies, also began to climb the masts to reach the apes and, immediately, tried to attack and push them, which gave Diddy and Dixie time to let go of them. But likewise, the apes rushed to flee through the highest sails and swing on them. Nevertheless, the animals didn't lag behind and set out to chase the apes, even if their weights made the ship's wood creak.

"DARN IT, I NEED THE GUNS!" one of the mandrills exclaimed desperately.

Later, with the hustle and bustle of the animals and the terrible weather condition, the apes fell back to the deck of the ship, being chased still by the herd of animals.

"DON'T LET THEM GO!" one of the animals exclaimed as they tried to surround the apes.

Then, Diddy and Dixie resumed the action and joined in trying to catch the evil apes, who were now already being intimidated by the whole herd of wild animals. Even Mr. Pinky and Jenny's quartet joined the chase as well, as they were back on their feet.

"DARN IT, WHERE DID ALL THESE STUPID ANIMALS COME FROM?!" the apes complained.

Almost a couple of minutes later, the apes had nowhere else to escape because everyone else had them surrounded, even receiving roars and wild growls from the herd of animals.

"Move aside! We're going to get them out of here!" one of the animals suddenly exclaimed, bringing one of the oars in his hands.

"But what the heck?!" one of the apes exclaimed.

Suddenly, some of the animals had in their hands or snouts the oars that, apparently, intended to use them against the apes.

"NO, NO, WHAT THE HECK!" one of the apes shouted before starting to run along with his group and Jemky's quartet.

Then, one of the animals handed a pair of oars to Diddy and Dixie to join the confrontation. Now the apes were again fleeing while being chased by the two little kongs and by some animals with oars in hand, in addition to being surrounded by the rest of the animals, Mr. Pinky and Jenny's quartet to block their way. The apes seemed to become so desperate that they had nowhere else to flee. It should be said that the oars were large enough to give them a strong push.

"GET OUT OF HERE, YOU BAD APES!" one of the animals exclaimed as he activated his oar and gave one of the mandrills a single push, throwing him over the side of the ship into the sea.

"NOOO, DARN YOU!" yelled the lead orangutan, furious. *"NOW YOU'RE GOING TO DEAL WITH-"*

Suddenly, another of the animals gave a single push with the oar to the orangutan, throwing him overboard into the sea.

"HEY, YOU DARN ANIMALS!" Jemky shouted at them. *"WHAT DO YOU BELIE-"*

Suddenly, Diddy rushed to give Jemky a push with the oar, which reached only to take him to the railings, but which was then complemented by another push that Dixie gave him and that managed to throw him into the sea.

"THROW THEM ALL AWAY!" one of the animals exclaimed, with an oar in hand.

For a few minutes, everyone was trying to throw the bad apes into the sea by pushing them with the oars, even though the weather conditions made it difficult for them to do so between times. Diddy and Dixie were also with oars in hand trying to throw the bad apes into the sea, later managing to throw Rocky and then Mandrew. On the other hand, the animals had managed to throw the other orangutan and another of the mandrills into the sea. Even Mr. Pinky, with oar in hand too, managed to throw the last remaining mandrill. Finally, together they threw Melenky, who was already the last of the group of bad apes to be thrown into the sea.

"WE DID IT, WE DID IT!" the animals exclaimed victoriously.

Diddy and Dixie, holding on to the railings for a while and keeping an agitated breath, began to smile when they saw that they had gotten rid of those apes from one moment to another; recently, they had been uncertain about how they could get rid of them, and now they had achieved it with the help of the animals, whom they looked to victoriously.

"WE'RE SAFE, LITTLE FRIENDS!" one of the tigers exclaimed, heading towards Diddy and Dixie with excitement, in the midst of all the weather conditions.

"Now we can go quietly!" other of the animals exclaimed in the same way. "Well... We just have to put the boats back on track."

"Hey!... T-that was amazing!" Diddy said tremblingly, but smiling again, while still not believing that they had been able to get rid of those apes. "You were great!"

"We thank you very much for saving us!" Dixie added in the same way. "Without you we would have been los-"

"HEY, YOUR LITTLE FRIENDS WANT TO LEAVE!" one of the elephants interrupted, pointing towards the bow of the ship.

Everyone turned to look and saw Jenny's quartet trying to cross the side of the bow of the ship, as if they wanted to jump into the sea, which made everyone alarmed.

"HEY, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!" Diddy and Dixie exclaimed, panicking and trying to head towards them. *"NOOO! COME BACK!"*

Diddy and Dixie along with the other animals ran to try to catch up with the quartet of mechanical children, but unfortunately... they had already thrown themselves into the sea.

"NOOO, WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM?!" Diddy exclaimed in despair.

Seconds later, one of the lions in the herd reached the ship's railing to see where Jenny and company had fallen.

"Oh, NO!" the lion exclaimed when he arrived. *"ARE THEY-"*

Suddenly, that lion seemed to have received an impact that knocked him back, leaving him lying on the deck, which made everyone panic at that unexpected and strange event.

"Oh, no, what happened to him?!" another of the animals exclaimed in alarm.

Immediately, and although with enough difficulty to move, everyone rushed to help the lion that had received that impact. When suddenly... *three human silhouettes* appeared climbing the bow of the ship, which frightened the whole herd instantly: it was the group of tamers, who were carrying guns in hand and seemed to want to invade the ship.

"IT CAN'T BE, THOSE DARNED ONES!" one of the animals exclaimed. *"LET'S CATCH THOSE-"*

Suddenly, the tamer shot that last animal that spoke, which increased the tension in everyone.

"THROW THOSE DARNED ONES AWAY TOO!" one of the elephants ordered, inviting the rest of the herd to chase the tamers.

The animals began to run towards the tamers to try to stop them, but the latter fired more shots at any of the animals that stood in their way, knocking down a couple more of them. Likewise, one of the animals went to try to help the animals that had been shot.

"HEY, DON'T PANIC!" that animal that went to help the wounded ones exclaimed. *"IT'S JUST THOSE DARTS TO SLEEP; THEY'RE NOT REAL SHOTS!"*

Those words relieved the rest of the animals a little, but even so, everyone remained tense while trying to reach the tamers and dodge their shots at the same time, not to mention that the wobble of the ship and the strong wind were being great obstacles at that time to move.

"There are those monkeys!" the one-eyed tamer pointed to Diddy and Dixie.

The tamers began running towards Diddy and Dixie, while also battling the weather conditions.

Diddy and Dixie, with difficulty mobilizing, gathered strength and began to run towards the tamers with oars in hand again, dodging the shots as soon as they tried to intercept them.

"TAKE THE WOUNDED ANIMALS TO THE CABIN!" Diddy told the herd of animals. *"WE'LL TAKE OVER THOSE TAM-"*

Diddy was interrupted due to another colossal wave that hit the ship and splashed water all around. But immediately, he and Dixie continued with their goal of going after the tamers, but not before they tried to shoot them, but the wobbling of the ship made it difficult for them to aim.

"URGH, THOSE DARN MONKEYS!" one of the tamers exclaimed. *"WE HAVE TO CATCH THEM!"*

Almost a minute later, Diddy and Dixie arrived with oars in hand to the tamers and began to try to attack them with them. Instantly, the tamers kept trying to shoot the tranquilizer darts at them.

On the other hand, the animals were helping the wounded ones and were taking them inside the cabins, where they had to make an effort to enter them through the door due to their size, and where they had to be careful that any of the kong children who were sheltered inside were not going to escape.

Diddy and Dixie continued to fight to attack the tamers with the oars, but they stopped the attacks with their weapons as a sword fight. When suddenly, a huge wave raised the ship again to let it land abruptly, which made the entire crew lose their balance, making them roll on the deck and covering them all with water.

"There they are! Catch them!" one of the tamers exclaimed, pointing to Diddy and Dixie.

Diddy and Dixie were getting up from the deck while coughing after having ingested seawater by accident, due to the huge wave that had splashed. But immediately, they got back into fighting position and headed back towards the tamers, but this time... they realized that they no longer had the oars and they didn't know where they were, so they had no way to defend themselves now. Suddenly, the tamers were ready to shoot them in front.

"Now you're going to see, YOU DISASTROUS MON-"

Diddy and Dixie decided to jump and pounce on the tamers however they could, similar to how they did when they confronted them in the helicopter in the city. Both slapped and scratched them wildly as they should be in such a situation. But a while later, the one-eyed tamer held Dixie's arm, stopping her next attack and smashed her into the deck. Diddy tried to defend her instantly, but the tamer of the prosthetic leg performed the same move with him and then the other tamer was ready to shoot them...

When suddenly, the three tamers were intercepted by the other animals, who had pushed them with their oars; they were so strong that it even made them drop their tranquilizer dart weapons at a considerable distance, leaving them now defenseless.

"DARN IT, THESE ANIMALS!" the tamers shouted, standing up again.

Instantly, the animals rushed to intimidate the tamers, even if the windstorm and the motion of the waves made it difficult for them to do so. The tamers began to show fear at the wild attitude of the animals and the lack of instruments to defend themselves from them, so the three of them began to run in terror while screaming and also trying not to slip on the deck.

"NOW, THROW THEM AWAY!" one of the animals exclaimed.

The animals continued to chase the three of them, while they fled from them until they had nowhere else to escape. Later, one of the animals gathered strength and ran to the one-eyed tamer to give him a push with his own body, and sent him straight to the sea.

"I FINALLY GAVE YOU WHAT YOU DESERVED, YOU SCOUNDREL!" the animal shouted to the tamer from the deck of the ship.

"LET'S ALSO FINISH WITH THOSE OTHER TWO THAT REMAINS!" another of the animals exclaimed as he chased the other tamers.

"AHHH, DARN IT WITH THESE ANIMALS!" the one-armed tamer shouted as he tried to run.

Later, another of the animals took more speed and gave a melee push to the one-armed tamer, managing to throw him towards the wild sea.

"THAT LAST SCOUNDREL ONE REMAINS!" one of the animals exclaimed as they ran after the last remaining tamer.

Unfortunately, the windstorm and the movement of the ship were starting to get stronger and made it difficult for them to get the tamer out of there. Even so, the animals did not give up and continued to try to catch him. A couple of minutes later, one of the animals approached the tamer and, gathering strength to accelerate, gave him a single push and managed to send him downhill towards the sea... thus getting rid of all danger.

"WE DID IT! WE DID IT!" some of the animals exclaimed. *"I didn't think I would have a chance to give those monstrous tamers their comeuppance!"*

"WE'LL FINALLY RETURN WELL TO HURRICANE ISL-"

Suddenly, a couple of consecutive waves hit the ships with force, causing them to tilt slightly towards the sea, almost making everyone think they would fall.

"IT'S NOT OVER YET! HOLD ON!" one of the animals exclaimed, clinging to a railing. *"WE MUST RETURN TO OUR BOAT!"*

The animals that were still standing, began to try to go back to their ship, although... they were having enough difficulty even to see and hear, for the wind had become much stronger that it was even deafening.

"HEY! BUT OUR BOAT IS BROKEN!" one of the animals that had reached to peek out of the bow commented.

Upon closer inspection, they realized that the boat where the animals originally came was torn to shreds, as if the larger ship had been the one that caused severe damage due to the continuous crash it had been having due to the wind.

"DON'T WORRY, AT LEAST WE'RE ALL FINE!" another of the animals shouted, raising their voice to be heard over the continuous noise of the weather phenomena. *"THIS WILL ALL BE OVER SOON!"*

Diddy and Dixie, meanwhile, were clinging to the railings of the ship, unable to move as much due to the force of the wind. Even though they had already managed to get rid of all the evil groups,

they still felt as if the situation was not quite over and as if they should still fear for their lives. At that time, everyone would be celebrating the fact that they had emerged unscathed, but the weather conditions did not allow them.

"Hey, Diddy!" Dixie exclaimed, having difficulty speaking at the time. *"W-what may have happened to the Jennies?!"*

"W-well..." Diddy replied, clinging to the railings and his eyes squinting due the wind. *"At least t-they didn't fall into the hands of those tamers!"*

"HEY, HERE'S ANOTHER YACHT!" one of the tigers exclaimed, leaning out near the bow.

Diddy and Dixie tried to peek overboard to look at where the animals were pointing, who were also clinging to the railings. On closer inspection, they noticed that another yacht, apart from the one brought by the apes, was anchored to the ship... and where inside it, they saw that four kong children were locked up and were desperate to get out.

"THE JENNIES!" Diddy exclaimed, panicking.

Diddy and Dixie, gathering some strength, tried to move by holding on from the railings to the bow of the ship so that they could do something to rescue them, even though they were having difficulty moving forward because the ship was ascending a wave that was growing larger and larger.

"HEY... OUR FRIENDS!" Dixie exclaimed, trying to point at the yacht as the wind hit her face. *"THEY ARE THERE!"*

The animals, although fighting against the wind and the height they were taking, tried to peek overboard again to be able to see the mechanical children, who were inside the yacht that perhaps belonged to the tamers.

Suddenly, Diddy and Dixie had gathered more strength to move and get to peek out of the bow. Dixie had even used her hair to gain momentum and also help Diddy to advance. They both looked towards the yacht and saw Jenny's quartet, who were loudly jumping and shoving at the yacht windows, trying to get out.

"HELP US!" Diddy told the animals, having to speak loudly. *"WE HAVE TO PULL THE ANCHOR OF THAT YACHT!"*

Then, the animals that were nearby tried to approach where the yacht was anchored on the ship and tried to grab the anchor's rope. Diddy and Dixie joined to help them, but unfortunately, the ship had another splash of water that made it difficult for several of the animals to see, and made them lose their balance to hold the rope. Luckily, Dixie had managed to hold the rope again so as not to let it lose, but she was still having difficulty holding onto the ship's side.

"HEY... I THINK WE ARE IN A SERIOUS DANGER!" one of the animals exclaimed.

Suddenly, everyone realized that they were again at a considerable height, because the ship had been lifted by a colossal wave and that they were now about to fall.

"HOLD ON TIGHT!" another of the animals yelled, clinging to the ship's railing.

Suddenly, Dixie had a sudden slip while holding the rope, to which Diddy rushed to hold her to help her. When suddenly... they felt as if the ship was going downhill until it almost reached a vertical position and, within a few seconds, a colossal amount of water enveloped the entire ship until it was submerged. And, as if that were not enough, Diddy and Dixie entered into a state of utmost desperation as they felt themselves detach from the ship's railing, and now they were submerged adrift underwater... Both could no longer see anything; they only felt how the sea was shaking them wildly while thousands of overwhelming thoughts invaded their minds at that moment. Even so, they both kept clinging to each other without letting go this time, even though they no longer had any idea what was going to happen now...

Chapter 74: On Hurricane Island?

After a long empty time, Diddy felt again that he was regaining the perception of reality, and managed to open his eyes suddenly when he realized that he was lying on the sand. When he got up completely, the first thing he stopped to look at was Dixie, who was right next to him and whom he held by the arm, while she continued to lie in the sand without moving.

"Dixie!" Diddy exclaimed in despair as he shook her to react. "Dixie, Dixie, are you okay?! *Tell me something!*"

Diddy continued to move Dixie continuously while trying to stay calm so as not to think the worst. When suddenly, he saw that Dixie squeezed her eyes, and then opened them instantly. Diddy was relieved to see that she was fine and that she had gotten up. Still, both remained worried.

"W-what happened?" Dixie asked, coming to her senses.

"Uh, I-I think we're on Hurricane Island again," Diddy replied, wishing he was right. "I-I think so."

Both of them hurried to observe the environment where they were now; the sky was still dark, but with certain flashes of illumination as if it were already the early hours of the morning. They were on the sand of a beach, where there were several rather wild waves near the shores.

"I think it's Hurricane Island," Dixie said, finishing looking around. "Let's see what else is around here to see if it's true."

Both immediately got up and began to observe in detail if they would finally be back on Hurricane Island. They climbed some trees to take a look from above... But they were starting to have a *bad feeling*.

"Dixie..." Diddy said with a fearful look. "I-I think this is not..."

"No, no, of course it is!" Dixie exclaimed instantly, and climbed down from the tree again to stay on the shores of the beach and observe the surroundings. Then, she turned to look at Diddy quite worryingly. "Diddy..."

Diddy climbed down from the trees too and headed towards Dixie while they both looked at each other with enormous concern and uncertainty... They didn't want to think that the story of when they were shipwrecked on Hurricane Island would repeat itself... and this time, much worse because they didn't even know which island was where they were now.

"No, no, don't worry... I know we'll find something that can help us," Diddy hastened, even if he didn't know if they would find any reference about where they were.

"And by the way..." Dixie said as she began to breathe harder and looked out to sea. "W-where are the others?!... Where is the ship?!"

"Oh... I don't know!" Diddy exclaimed, going to look out over the whole sea in sight too... and where there seemed to be *no sign* of any of the crew members who came on the ship... not even the ship. "No, no, no! It can't be, it can't be... What if something terrible happened to them?!"

"The last thing I remember was that the ship fell and plunged into the water!" Dixie added in the same tone of despair.

"No, no, maybe they're around here!" Diddy exclaimed, trying to stay calm. "I suggest we go look for-"

Suddenly, they both heard some sounds among the trees behind them. They turned to look and were on alert at the same time, while some movements reached to be seen among the vegetation.

"Let's go carefully over there to see," Diddy whispered to Dixie.

Then, both of them went stealthily through the vegetation to discover what that sudden movement had been; they wanted to think that it would be one of the animals and that maybe they would all have been shipwrecked in that same place.

"*Wait!*" Dixie whispered, taking Diddy's arm. "I think I saw a shadow or someone dark."

Both stopped to look at an area of vegetation that seemed to present movement... and where a silhouette seemed to have been seen nearby. The two wanted to go see who it was, but instead, they tried to hide behind some trees in case it was any danger.

"Let's go and see," Diddy whispered. "I think it's Mr.-"

Suddenly, some noises in the leaves behind them surprised them and, when they turned to look, they clearly saw a *human* silhouette trying to reach them.

"*COME HERE, LITTLE MONKEYS!*"

Diddy and Dixie, panicking instantly, rushed out of there as their palpitations accelerated strongly at the sight of no one else and none other than *one of the tamers*. They both had no idea where he might have come from, and they would have stopped to fight with him... if not because he had a gun in his hand.

"*Don't let them escape!*" another voice suddenly exclaimed which, from the way it was heard, sounded like that of another of the tamers.

Diddy and Dixie looked at each other as they ran and saw that, indeed, there were now two of the circus tamers.

"*Ahhh, how did those crazy tamers find us?!*" Diddy exclaimed in despair as he fled with Dixie through the vegetation.

"*I thought they were already dead!*" Dixie exclaimed in the same way.

The two kongs continued to run as fast as their four limbs gave them, while those tamers began to shoot with their weapons in the direction of both; apparently, these were tranquilizer darts, but even so, Diddy and Dixie had to be careful not to be intercepted. A while later, the tension in them increased when suddenly... the third tamer appeared to them by surprise in front and with a weapon in hand.

"*STAY STILL!*"

Diddy and Dixie hurriedly turned to run in the opposite direction... not before forgetting that in that opposite direction, came the other two tamers.

"STOP, LITTLE MONKEYS!" one of them exclaimed, reappearing in front of the two.

With both directions at risk, Diddy and Dixie tried to turn into another route to escape the tamers. When suddenly, in the middle of the escape... Dixie felt a sudden prick in her arm that caused her to stop abruptly and fall to the ground. Diddy stopped a second later when he realized that Dixie had fallen, and rushed to her aid.

"DIXIE!" Diddy exclaimed when he saw that Dixie was now lying on the ground with her eyes narrowing. *"DIX-"*

Suddenly, Diddy felt a prick in his arm too, which took him by surprise and made him fall to the ground, while feeling as if his strength was leaving... Afterwards, he realized that both he and Dixie had syringes in their arms that had been injected into both. Diddy felt his eyes inevitably closing while his vision was distorting as he caught sight of the group of tamers heading towards both and, several seconds later, his sense of reality and his vision were completely fading...

Chapter 75: Unforeseen by the Air

A dark view in its entirety was what Diddy's eyes were visualizing; everything seemed to be empty and with no notion of time. When suddenly... small sounds were beginning to be heard through his ears; they sounded like continuous squeals accompanied by redundant blows... Those squeals seemed to come from small primates that were getting louder and closer. Suddenly, the dark vision that Diddy perceived began to take color until he felt that he was awake. Instantly having regained full consciousness, Diddy opened his eyes... and the first thing he could observe were some *bars* all around him.

"*W-what?!*" Diddy exclaimed, immediately getting up to look at where he was.

Diddy was perplexed by what he witnessed: he was *locked inside a cage*, which was padlocked. He panicked immediately as he shook the bars of the cage. The setting where he was now was what appeared to be an outdoor esplanade in the afternoon. And not only he was in the same situation... Looking ahead, he could see *three more cages* where, enclosed in the same way, were three *known* groups in each one, whom he did not expect to see again. Diddy then turned to look at his own cage and immediately realized that Dixie was lying seemingly unconscious next to him.

"*Dixie!*" Diddy exclaimed, beginning to shake her in despair. "*Dixie, tell me something, please!*"

Suddenly, Dixie seemed to be coming to her senses, though not yet fully recovered.

"*Dixie, wake up! I don't know where we are!*"

"W-what... happens?" Dixie said as Diddy pulled her arm to lift her up. "What happened?"

"I don't know what place this is!" Diddy replied before pointing to the front. "And... and look at that!"

Dixie, having regained her sense of reality, made a gesture of enormous shock when she saw that, firstly, they were both locked in the cage, and second... three other cages were in front: in one of them, there was the very group of mandrills and orangutans; in the next cage was Jemky's quartet; and finally, in the last cage was Jenny's quartet.

"W-what... But how..." Dixie said, looking all confused at Diddy, and then looking towards the other cages.

The group of mandrills and orangutans stood silently as they stared earnestly at Diddy and Dixie. The kids from Jemky's quartet had an empty expression, in fact... they were seen with a lost look as the four of them were held together, as if trying to protect themselves... and as if they looked really *scared*; they were expressions that Diddy and Dixie had never seen on them before. Finally, the kids from Jenny's quartet were all jumping and pushing wildly the bars of the cage, as a sign of wanting to get out; from those four children was that came the squeals and hits that were heard at the beginning.

"Diddy... wh-what's all this?!" Dixie asked, not believing everything that was happening.

"I have no idea!" Diddy replied, tremblingly. "All this h-has to be a joke; maybe I'm dreamin-"

"The tamers!" Dixie interrupted. "The last thing that happened... was that they shot at us!"

Diddy and Dixie now felt lost; they had no idea how and why they were there. Then, although quite insecure, Diddy dared to ask the other apes with no other alternative.

"Hey!... You!" Diddy called the apes and Jemky's quartet. "What... What is this due to?! What happened?!"

But neither group wanted to answer them. The mandrills and orangutans even started emitting small growls as they looked at Diddy and Dixie angrily, which made them both uncomfortable. The bully children continued to look lost, while the mechanical ones kept trying to push the bars of the cage as wild animals.

"T-tam... tamers," Rocky stuttered suddenly and as if he had difficulty answering.

"I-I'm afraid..." Melenky said with an anguished look.

The kids from Jemky's quartet looked at their dads as if they wanted to beg them to do something, but they could only respond by stretching their hands through the bars to take theirs, as a sign of wanting to reassure them.

"We have to get out of here," Dixie whispered to Diddy.

"But I don't know how," Diddy replied, looking at the cage. "If only we could open--"

Suddenly, voices different from everyone else's were heard approaching the place. Diddy and Dixie instantly recognized *who* the voices belonged to and became tense to the max.

"... well, yes, we have no choice," the one-eyed tamer was clearly heard. "I just hope that four chimpanzees will be enough, if not we'll have to explain the situation and beg to be believed. At least those useless apes managed to give artificial immortality to those four little ones that were mechanized first."

The group of tamers arrived at the cages, accompanied by two other men; the latter wore formal-looking clothes with ties, as well as caps and glasses. Then, the tamers, also bringing whips in hand, went to the apes' cage, and each of them whipped the whip to the bars of that cage, causing a fright to the five apes.

"*Miserable...*" the one-eyed tamer told them before whipping the cage hard again. "*Now because of you we are not going to present the mechanized primates well! We entrust you with that task and you CAN'T DO ANYTHING RIGHT!*"

"*And hopefully those first four monkeys that you mechanized will serve us,*" the one with the prosthetic leg added. "*Otherwise, you will all be dead apes!*"

"Or rather... we're going to mechanize your four little brats!" the one-eyed tamer added, pointing to Jemky's quartet. "And the ones who will do the procedure on them will be *you*."

"Hmm, and you had us fooled all the time," the one-armed tamer said. "We trusted you *all the darn time* that you wouldn't have any brats with you anymore, let alone have them hidden... I don't understand how you didn't get rid of them; those four ones *aren't even your children!*"

"W-what what?" Jemky whispered, turning to look at the tamers along with the other three kids in the group.

There was a moment of silence while the five apes turned to look at the quartet, as the latter looked at them with an expression of shock and as if they did not know what to think at that moment.

Suddenly, the one-eyed tamer headed towards the cage of Jemky's quartet, staring at them sternly, as the four children began to tremble like never before. Afterwards, the man pulled a gun from his pockets and pointed it at the four of them, making them tense instantly; he then shot them, hitting the projectile in Mandrew's chest... Although later, the projectile was ejected from his skin and the latter was restored.

"Sure... They gave them that immunizing elixir," the tamer said, raising eyebrows. Then, he shot towards the cage of the adult apes, which fell on one of the mandrills and, in the same way, the projectile was ejected from his skin. "And you too, from what I see. That explains how we still found you all alive after that storm... But as soon as the effect wears off and we return from headquarters, *you're going to pay us!* Take it for granted."

The tamer whipped the cage one last time before retreating, while the apes looked at them the same way that Jemky and company looked at them when they were punished.

"Useless apes," the one-armed tamer said furiously. "First, you lost all the animals almost two years ago, and now you also lose some simple little primates!"

The apes stared at Diddy and Dixie with looks of deep hatred, as if they wanted to accuse them with the tamers for being both the ones who had thwarted their plans... if they could talk to them.

On the other hand, the kids from Jenny's quartet kept pushing the bars of their cage, because they were the only ones who had no idea what was happening.

"Stay still, you too!" the tamer with the prosthetic leg said, whipping with the whip to the cage of them, even if they did not calm down with it.

The one-eyed tamer had gone to talk to the other two men who were present. Then, he took out of his pockets what appeared to be bills and handed them to them.

"Take this," the tamer told those men. "Alright, get ready for the flight. And remember... mum's the word," he added, signaling them to keep quiet, before those two men left completely from that area.

For their part, Diddy and Dixie had no idea what the group of tamers would be up to, but with each passing second, they were both filled with deep uncertainty. They only wished that all of that were just a nightmare with all their enemies; one they would be having while unconscious after being dragged by the sea, and that they would soon wake up.

"H-hey, Dad," Jemky called his father in the distance in a trembling voice. "Is w-what... these tamers said true? Aren't you... our... dads?"

The lead orangutan, and then the other four apes, looked with absolute seriousness at their four... *sons*? Seconds later, the lead orangutan heaved a sigh and only nodded lightly, confirming that shocking and unexpected revelation for the boys, who then looked into nothingness, becoming paralyzed.

"B-but how..." Rocky exclaimed, still with the same expression. "And then what?"

"Long story!" the brown-lapel mandrill interrupted, showing disgust as he answered, and then turning around. "But no, boys... You actually... *are not* our children... We adopted you, and it was with luck. And no... Your real parents have been gone from this world for years."

"B-but you told us that our moms abandoned us as babies!" Melenky replied. "How could you..."

"They didn't abandon you!" the lead orangutan interrupted. "They never abandoned you; none of us wanted to abandon our children we had!"

"What?! What are they talking about?" Jemky replied. "Tell us what's going-"

"It's just a long story!" the orangutan interrupted, being uncomfortable in wanting to answer. Then, he just sighed again. "I'm sorry... And I'm serious, I don't think I can tell-"

Suddenly, the group of tamers returned to the cages with whips in hand, and one of them whipped the cage of Jenny's quartet, despite the fact that they continued to show themselves wild due the confinement. Then, the tamer with a prosthetic leg pulled a device that appeared to be a remote control from his pockets and began manipulating it. Seconds later, the mechanical children began to calm down until they were completely static as if they had been turned off.

"Well, it's time to go," the one-eyed tamer said, approaching the cage of mechanical children. "First these monkeys. With the other ones, you know what we'll do as soon as the immunizing effect wears off. For now, we'll take them inside along with their four brat kids."

Then, two of the tamers started rolling the cage of the mechanical kong children, and they left the area with it. Meanwhile, the one-eyed tamer withdrew for a while, but returned shortly after with a large sack in his hands before heading towards Diddy and Dixie's cage.

"Ah, these disastrous little monkeys have already woken up," the tamer exclaimed, looking at them angrily. "These darn monkeys *who ruined our zoo, our circus and our reputation!*... But this is not going to remain like this."

The one-eyed tamer kicked the cage where Diddy and Dixie were, which scared them both away and they clung to each other, although Dixie kept staring at him with all the hatred she could feel.

Suddenly, the other two tamers returned with whip in hand, and headed straight for Diddy and Dixie's cage as well.

"Now, we'll take them out carefully," the tamer said, taking some keys out of his pockets, while the other tamers stood around the cage.

"Diddy, it's now or never," Dixie whispered, looking sideways at them. "As soon as they open it, we'll escape."

Then, the one-armed tamer inserted the keys into the lock of the cage and began to open it, so Diddy and Dixie were attentive to what they could do.

"Carefully, first to the monkey," the one-eyed tamer said, opening the sack he had brought.

The instant the door was open, Diddy and Dixie pushed it to make an escape attempt, but unfortunately, the tamer of the prosthetic leg reached to grab Diddy's torso, grabbing him by the

arms as well. Dixie grabbed Diddy by one foot and pulled him with her strength, but the one-armed tamer slammed the door shut, catching Dixie's hand sharply. Diddy started trying to kick them, but between the three of them they held him by all his limbs. The one-eyed tamer even pulled the gun out of his pockets again and pointed it at Diddy, stopping him instantly. They immediately thrust Diddy into the sack, leaving him no more time to do another attack.

"Now the chimpanzee," the one-eyed tamer said after closing the sack where Diddy was still struggling to get out. "Carefully, take her by the hair first."

Dixie, with quite hectic breathing, did not lose the courage of being able to escape and became attentive. And then, when the tamers opened the door again, Dixie lunged at them... Not before they rushed to take her hair and limbs, and even, the one-eyed tamer pointed the gun at her as well. Even so, Dixie showed resistance to them, but together they managed to keep her imprisoned. Immediately, the one-eyed tamer reopened the sack and introduced Dixie next to Diddy too, then closed it with more force.

"Alright! Quick!"

The three tamers rushed to take them both in sacks, while both hit and kicked inside it to try to open it.

"Ugh, these monkeys don't sit still!" one of the tamers grumbled before whipping the sack. "Stay still, monkeys!"

Diddy and Dixie, trying not to let themselves be consumed by panic, continued to fight ready to get out of there.

"Darn scoundrel tamers!" Dixie yelled from inside the sack, which sounded like primate squeals to the tamers' ears

"Let's not give up, Dixie! We'll get out of here!" Diddy added as they continued to make the effort to get out.

"Will these two kids be useful for the mechanization test?" one of the tamers was heard saying.

"Of course," another of them said. "In addition, the emerald green eyes of the chimpanzee will be useful for artificial immortality like that emerald. And at least those four mechanized chimpanzees have already been immortalized, so it won't be hard... Although it would have been better if the other forty primate children had been mechanized."

"Hmm, and hopefully we have these two little monkeys to take as subjects," the third tamer added.

Diddy and Dixie had no idea what the tamers were talking about, but they assumed it wouldn't be anything good. Both continued to try to open the sack while they were moving inside it.

"Stay still, monkeys!" one of the tamers shouted at them, giving the sack another lash. "Anyway, there would be no better punishment for the two of them after having ruined everything for us."

A couple of minutes later, and already starting to get tired of fighting, Diddy and Dixie felt that they had been left on solid ground... and heard the sound of a cage closing.

"Alright, now let's go to the vehicle," one of the tamers was heard saying.

Suddenly, Diddy and Dixie no longer heard the tamers and did not feel movement to the outside either, so it would be the best time to continue trying to open the sack, without so much difficulty this time, since it was not being manipulated by anyone.

"Almost, almost!" Diddy exclaimed as they struggled to open the sack.

Suddenly, both began to hear repetitive noises that became continuous and loud gradually, in addition to feeling a vibration on the surface where they were.

"*What's all this?!*" Diddy exclaimed, going into despair along with Dixie.

"No idea, but let's get out of here quickly!" Dixie added.

Both continued to struggle with the entrance of the sack, which they had already managed to partially open. Suddenly, they also felt as if the surface where they were was *slowly tilting* as the thunderous noise continued to resonate.

"Oh, no, another cage!" Dixie exclaimed as she looked through the hole they had opened, and where, indeed, were other cage bars.

A minute later, the thunderous noise was fading, while Diddy had already managed to get an arm out of the sack and grab the strip that had it tied. Diddy began to untie the knot of the strip and, a few seconds later, managed to open the sack completely. Both of them immediately came out and observed everything around.

"Oh, darn it!" Diddy complained when he saw that they were definitely inside a cage.

"Look!" Dixie said as she turned to look back.

Inside that same cage, there were the kids from *Jenny's quartet*, this time all turned off again like dolls.

"Oh, no," Diddy said, pressing the left ear of one of them to see if they turned on... But this time it wasn't. "The tamers might have turned them off. I wonder what they intend to do with them."

"Diddy, look, this cage is open!" Dixie said.

Dixie was manipulating the lock of the cage, which luckily, was unlocked, so both were able to get out of there without problem.

"Wait a minute... but what place is *this*?" Diddy asked, looking everywhere.

The place where they were at that time was a small room, which had white walls with only a small square window. The floor was carpeted and there was only one door in the center of a wall, which had a circular window above it.

"What is this?" Dixie wondered.

"Wait a minute!" Diddy exclaimed with a suspicious look toward the square window.

That window seemed to emit the image of the sky and nothing but the sky with what appeared to be moving clouds. Diddy and Dixie hurried to lean out and look outside.... They both gawked at each other as panic began to take hold of them.

"No, no, no, it can't be! No way!" Dixie exclaimed desperately.

Dixie went to the door in that area, which she was able to open without problems. In doing so, she got a not-so-pleasant surprise...

"No, no, are we in..." Diddy couldn't finish the sentence because of the panic he was having. "Oh, no, no, *we have to get out of here! Quick!*"

"But how will we get out?!" Dixie exclaimed, panicking as well. "I don't know where we can get out of here!"

Both began to run towards the new area where they had entered. This consisted of a medium closed corridor, with windows on the sides and a few seats, and where at the end of this, there was another door. Indeed... both were inside what was an airplane, or rather... a large and apparently private jet. That could be recognized because, through the windows, the sky was visualized with moving clouds and part of the wings of the aircraft.

"There has to be a way to escape!" Diddy said, quickly watching everywhere.

"What if we check in that door that is over there?" Dixie pointed out.

Both ran to the end of that aisle; they wanted to think that they would find a way to escape from that aircraft, as they never expected to be in that situation. When they got to the door, they tried to open it... but this one was blocked. Both began to struggle with the door as much as they could, but even so, they could not open it. Desperation was creeping over them, as they watched through the windows how the aircraft accelerated.

"*Oh, why don't it open?!*" Diddy exclaimed, knocking on the door continuously along with Dixie.

"It's blocked!" Dixie added before kicking the door one last time. "Maybe those stupid tamers are inside!"

Suddenly, Diddy and Dixie were grabbed by someone. Both turned and almost stopped breathing when they saw *who* had caught them.

"We got you, *little brat monkeys!*"

Diddy and Dixie were instantly alerted and began trying to hit someone who was none other than two of the *evil apes*: the brown-lapel mandrill and the black-lapel orangutan.

"*Darn monkeys, you're going to pay us whether you want to or not!*" the mandrill exclaimed, who was holding Diddy, and grabbed him by the neck to smash him to the ground.

The orangutan, who was holding Dixie, did the same to her and tried to press her neck. Diddy began kicking the mandrill's face, getting him to let go. He then immediately pounced on the orangutan, getting him to release Dixie.

Diddy and Dixie started running again to the other end of the aisle. When they thought that they would at least be calm without anyone to disturb them, they could not believe that they would find two of those apes; now they had the adrenaline pumping, and they had no idea how those apes had boarded the flight as well.

"Come here, you scoundrels!" the orangutan shouted.

The two bad apes rushed after them. Diddy and Dixie, despairing due the scarcity of escape routes there, each of them ducked under the seats there were, and slipped away to disappear from the sight of the apes.

"You're not going anywhere, you little imps!" the mandrill exclaimed, sneaking under the seats to catch them. *"You're going to pay us dearly for always ruining everything for us!"*

Diddy and Dixie, after a minute, left the seats and continued running through the aisle... not before the orangutan appeared to them by surprise and rushed to catch them. Both were going to attack the orangutan, but unfortunately, the mandrill appeared from behind and grabbed them both as well. Immediately, the apes abruptly grabbed each of the little kongs and cornered them against one of the seats as if trying to choke them with their hands, while Diddy and Dixie struggled to free themselves from them.

"You darn miserable brats!" the mandrill exclaimed, holding Diddy. "The bosses are going to kill our children and all of us, but we refuse to die without having finished you both off first! *You pair of disastrous brats!*"

"Starting with you, brat monkey girl!" the orangutan said, holding Dixie. "First you and your family left us bankrupt almost two years ago! And now you two finished destroying our lives and took all those kid-"

"Hey, wait, wait!" Dixie interrupted, trying to get free from the orangutan. *"I'm sorry, I didn't know you were allies of those monstrous tamers! We didn't know that everything you do, you do for those miserab-"*

"But you're going to pay us right now, BRAT MONKEYS!" the orangutan shouted as they exerted more force against Diddy and Dixie.

The apes held Diddy and Dixie in such a tight arm that it was difficult for both of them to get their hands off them. Suddenly, Dixie was able to stretch out her arm and pull the orangutan's fur to weaken him and immediately kicked him in the face, followed by an attack with her hair on both him and the mandrill, managing to escape with Diddy afterwards.

"Scoundrel monkeys!" the orangutan exclaimed, lunging at the two, but they dodged instantly.

Then, being behind the apes, Diddy and Dixie pounced on them, and began to attack them as they did with the tamers. But likewise, the apes returned a few hits. The confrontation continued in the same way, when suddenly, the previously blocked door opened.

"Stop there!" someone coming out of that door exclaimed.

Diddy, Dixie and the apes were paralyzed when they saw that, coming out of that door, there were two men with weapons in hand... They were the same two men with whom the tamers had recently been talking; these seemed to be the pilots of the aircraft, since in the background they could see the main cockpit of it.

"Don't move, apes!" one of those men said.

Diddy and Dixie didn't know those men at all, but for the guns they had in their hands, they became more tense than they already were.

Suddenly, and as if they did not care about the consequences, the mandrill and the orangutan pounced on the two human men.

"HEY!..." one of them exclaimed.

"NO, GET AWAY, APES!" the other one added.

The two adult apes even began to hit and attack the pair of pilots to the point of leaving them defenseless, when suddenly, both managed to take the guns out of their hands.

"NO, DROP THAT!" one of the pilots shouted in despair. "DROP THOSE GUNS, AP-"

Suddenly, the two apes began to shoot in the direction of the two men, as if they didn't care about anything. The two pilots had managed to hide behind the cockpit and avoid being hit.

Diddy and Dixie, seeing that now the two apes turned to see them and with *gun in hand*, went on high alert, trying not to be consumed by panic or lose control. Both rushed to hide behind the seats and even under them, while the apes had begun to try to shoot them. Diddy and Dixie had all the desperation consuming them, because in that closed space, they would have no way to escape, and the risk of being impacted was high.

"Brats! YOU WON'T COME OUT OF HERE ALIVE!" the orangutan exclaimed as they unleashed some shots.

Diddy and Dixie, both in a state of panic, kept hiding from the apes and trying to avoid the gunfire. Something that also made their hair stand on end was that some projectiles even bounced off when hitting the windows of the plane, increasing the risk of being hit.

Meanwhile, in the cockpit of the aircraft, the two pilots could be heard talking desperately through what appeared to be a communication device.

"Messrs. Owens, Messrs. Owens, please listen to us!" the pilot exclaimed toward the device.

"MISTERS, IT IS URGENT... YOUR APES, MISTERS! We have a huge problem: those two monkeys that you are going to take are on the loose, and besides TWO OF YOUR APES ESCAPED AND I DON'T KNOW HOW THEY BOARDED THE PLANE!"

"AND THEY'VE GONE CRAZY!" the co-pilot added. "THEY'RE SHOOTING IN HERE!"

Diddy and Dixie continued to fight not to be hit by the projectiles, even if they knew they had no choice at the time. When suddenly... both managed to see inside the cockpit some objects that appeared to be *other* guns. Both continued to run throughout that section, crouching several times to avoid being hit and, seconds later, managed to swerve so they could enter the cockpit, and rushed to take the additional weapons that the pilots had.

"... BUT WE CAN'T, MESSRS. OWENS... HEY, NO, DROP THAT, MONKEYS!" the pilot exclaimed as he saw Diddy and Dixie taking their extra guns.

The apes were going to unload other shots, but suddenly, they saw Diddy and Dixie coming out of the cockpit with guns in hand as well and pointing it at them.

"So, you want to play with us, don't you?!" the mandrill exclaimed. "BUT LET'S SEE IF YOU CAN-"

Without further thought, Diddy and Dixie rushed to shoot them straight at the apes, knocking them down in one fell swoop. Then, both had to duck instantly when they saw that some projectiles had bounced in their direction. Seconds later, they were a little relieved that they were able to take down the apes, although... they realized that the immunizing effect seemed to still be in effect in them, since those two apes were getting up again.

"Oh, no..." Diddy muttered when he saw that the situation was getting heavy.

The apes, quite furiously this time, re-enlisted their guns and rushed to shoot in the direction of Diddy and Dixie, but both sneaked under the seats.

"We must shoot them however we can!" Diddy exclaimed as they moved under the seats with Dixie. *"We can't do anything els-"*

"STAY STILL!" the orangutan shouted to them, appearing under the seats too.

Diddy and Dixie rushed to shoot the orangutan. Then, the brown-lapel mandrill also appeared below, but both shot him in time. The two little kongs left the seats, but it was no more than five seconds when they saw the apes standing up and pointing at them again.

"YOU CAN'T GO ANYWHERE, YOU LITTLE FOOLS!" the apes shouted before firing again.

Diddy and Dixie were not far behind and continued to try to shoot at the apes, but at the same time, they had to avoid the projectiles that were bouncing, which made it very difficult for them to target. The apes were in the same situation, but they didn't have as much of a problem with being hit. Both sides continued trying to take each other down, also using the seats to shield themselves if necessary.

A couple of minutes later, Diddy and Dixie had managed to shoot the mandrill to the floor, but the orangutan was nearby, so they both sneaked under the seats. When they left the seats, both did not see any trace of any of the apes, but anyway, they were attentive in case they appeared by surprise. The two had their palpitations accelerated to the extreme, but they did not want to lose control in the situation. When suddenly, the apes suddenly appeared behind one of the seats and fired in the direction of Diddy and Dixie, but they fired other shots before starting to move over the seats. Suddenly, running on one of the seats... Diddy felt a sudden rub on his foot that burned to the point of forcing him to stop and fall to the floor.

"Diddy!" Dixie exclaimed, panicking at the sudden incident.

Suddenly, the apes were about to shoot Dixie, but she managed to stop them by shooting them head-on to knock them to the floor. Afterwards, Dixie immediately went to where Diddy had fallen to help him.

"Diddy! Diddy! Are you okay?!" she asked him desperately.

"Yes, but I think that..." Diddy replied as he held his foot and complained a little about the pain, before showing it to Dixie.

Dixie opened her eyes to the fullest when she saw that Diddy's foot had a small scrape; apparently, he had been hit by one of the projectiles, although luckily, it had only been a slight rubbing.

"I think one of their projectiles hit me," Diddy added, still holding his foot, which was still hurting.

"Oh, no, no, Diddy," she exclaimed, starting to push him. "You have to hide right now! Go back to the cabin where we were first! Go!"

"What?! Hey, but I'm fine, it wasn't serious!" Diddy replied.

"No, get back!" Dixie replied, pushing him. "You won't be able to walk well!"

"Of course I can! Look-" Diddy, as soon as he stood up and took his first steps, emitted a small squeal of pain as he settled his injured foot.

"Just hide!" Dixie replied, hurrying to help him to the cabin in the end, where they had been first.

"Hey, hey, but wait, Dixie!" Diddy interrupted as they reached the door. "Are you going to stay and fight those apes?!"

"Well, yes! You stay to rest!"

"Oh, no, no, no, Dixie! I'm not going to leave you alone in this!"

"But you won't be able to run well like this!" Dixie insisted. "Please stay in there!"

"No, Dixie, I'll go on- *The apes!*" Diddy exclaimed, pointing behind Dixie.

Dixie immediately turned and started shooting at the two apes, who had already gotten up and were about to shoot them both.

"Hide, Diddy!" she said, pushing him harder towards the cabin and then closing the door.

"Hey!" Diddy exclaimed from inside.

Dixie continued the confrontation against the apes. She also used her hair to be able to make longer jumps on the seats. The apes tried to hit her with the shots, but Dixie kept moving to dodge the projectiles. Suddenly, the door to the main cockpit opened, and the two men came out again with a gun.

"STAY STILL YOU ALL, APES!" the pilot ordered. *"STOP-"*

But before long, the apes set out to shoot the two men mercilessly and unexpectedly. The two men hurried to hide, but this time... they had been shot in the limbs, to the point of falling to the floor. And, to make matters worse, in the last shots launched by the apes, they had hit directly towards the dashboard of the cockpit of the plane, activating a flashing light as if it were an alarm.

"NOO!... DARN... APES!" the wounded men exclaimed, sitting on the floor of the cockpit.

The apes seemed to ignore it and continued to try to take Dixie down, while she rushed to continue shielding herself... even if panic was taking over more of her when she saw that the aircraft was beginning to emit worrying noises.

Diddy, inside the other cabin, and with his injured foot, was close to the wall of the aircraft, but likewise, he did not stop thinking about how that situation could end; the alternatives he thought were all negative and he was only beginning to despair. Suddenly, the plane was again making strange and thunderous noises, which was worrying him a lot. Helpless, Diddy gathered strength and started walking towards the door... although the pain bothered him a lot when settling his foot,

and it was difficult for him to walk fast. Anyway, Diddy with gun in hand, decided to open the door to take a look and see that at least Dixie was fine.

Dixie kept jumping, sneaking or running around the area as she tried to take down the apes, even as the immunizing effect on them remained in force. Dixie only prayed that at least that effect was about to end and that it would be fast, since all the adrenaline was consuming her and she feared that everything would end very badly.

Suddenly, the aircraft emitted a sudden thunderous noise, accompanied by a turbulent movement that was tilting the floor, until everyone lost their balance. Dixie began to move, holding on to the seats that were there, and tried to continue shooting at the apes, who had stumbled after the sudden movement. In one of the many strong movements of the aircraft, Dixie fell rolling down the aisle and, unfortunately, her hand collided with one of the supports of a seat, and made her drop the gun. She rushed to try to pick it up, but other turbulence prevented her from reaching it... The gun was now at the other end of the aisle and away from Dixie.

"STAY STILL, GIRL!" the mandrill exclaimed, appearing by surprise behind Dixie and grabbing her hair along with the orangutan, who was holding her limbs.

Dixie rushed to try to hit them, but the apes struggled continuously not to let her. The aircraft was having stronger turbulence, which made it a little difficult for the apes to stand. Dixie took the opportunity to try to attack them with blows, even if they carried guns. But the apes also tried to hold her.

Diddy, who was now behind the last seat and trying to hold on to it so as not to fall, watched Dixie's confrontation with the two apes, and he also saw how Dixie was at a great disadvantage against those apes. Diddy, with the gun in hand too, knew he had to do something, even if he could no longer walk, let alone run well.

"You brat girl, you won't be saved this time!" the orangutan exclaimed, dropping the gun to have his hands free and hold Dixie by the hair and neck with both ones, then smashed her to the floor abruptly. Then, the mandrill adjusted his gun and pointed it at Dixie, ready to shoot her amid the turbulence.

Diddy, seeing that, gathered strength without caring about the pain of his foot, climbed to the top of the seat and, without thinking at all, shot the orangutan and the mandrill in the distance, knocking them to the floor in one fell swoop... But almost instantly, the mandrill stood up again with his gun and shot Diddy... without giving him time to avoid it. He felt an impact on his abdomen that knocked him back to the floor.

"DIDDY, NO!" Dixie exclaimed, panicking at the instant she saw that.

The mandrill, gun in hand, was heading to the end of the aisle as if he wanted to look for Diddy to finish him off... Although this time, he had difficulty walking. But Dixie took courage and hurried to go to pounce on the mandrill and give him some savage attacks as she could, not caring about the gun he was carrying and gathering strength she didn't even know where from. Afterwards, Dixie managed to snatch the gun from the mandrill and did not hesitate to press the trigger against him... although it no longer fired.

"Stupid monke-"

Dixie rushed to beat him with the same gun until he was knocked to the floor and weakened... which she was getting this time, as if the mandrill was affected by the attacks. A couple of minutes later, Dixie stopped attacking the mandrill when she saw that he no longer exerted any resistance and, rather... he didn't move so much. She was going to keep attacking if it weren't for remembering that she had to help someone else.

"Diddy!" Dixie exclaimed desperately as she made her way to get him. *"Diddy, Diddy, are you-"*

Dixie felt a huge shake inside when she found him. Diddy was lying on the floor, his breathing heaving... and with one hand holding on to his abdominal area.

"Keep calm, keep calm, Diddy! Don't tell me..." Dixie exclaimed desperately as she tried to stay calm as much as possible so she could help him... although it was in vain upon observing Diddy holding that affected area on him. *"Oh, no, no, Diddy!"*

Without further thought, Dixie acted out of survival instinct and tried to take Diddy in her arms to carry him to the last cabin, where they had been at first. She placed Diddy sitting against one of the walls, and then hurriedly closed the door and secured it in case the apes would come, as before long they would get up again.

"Diddy! Diddy, please, tell me something!" she exclaimed when headed to him and shook his shoulders a little.

Diddy, who was still breathing in an agitated way and even straining his vision, kept his hand holding the wound he had as a result of the impact he had received, where he was feeling an enormous burning while processing what had happened.

"D-Dixie... I... can't..." Diddy said slowly.

Dixie, also processing what happened, carefully took Diddy's hand to observe where he had been hit by the projectile... Seeing his injury clearly, she was only filled with extreme panic while not knowing what to do.

"Oh, no, no, it can't be!" Dixie exclaimed, standing up all alarmed without being able to calm down while looking everywhere as if she wanted to find a quick solution.

Dixie, trying her best not to let herself be consumed by anguish, decided to go to the cage where they had come with Jenny's quartet, and took the sack where she and Diddy had been brought. She immediately folded the sack randomly and took it to Diddy.

"Diddy, listen to me!"

"D-Dix..." Diddy stammered, straining his voice.

"Listen to me! Put this on you!" she interrupted as she pulled Diddy's hand back and placed the folded sack on him, then pressed it against the wound, which caused some discomfort to Diddy. *"Hold it on here and don't take it out at all!"*

"W-wh-why-"

"My aunt and uncle taught me this! Just hold it and don't force yourself to talk, okay?!" she added, putting his hand on him again to hold the wound.

Dixie, still trying to restrain herself, stood up again and looked everywhere if she had any choice but to take... But little by little, she was losing all calm and hope that she could do something about it, because in truth, *she had nothing else to do*. Suddenly... she also saw how Diddy slowed his breathing and his eyes were squinting little by little.

"Oh... *No, no, no, DIDDY!*" Dixie exclaimed, heading to him again with all the desperation she could feel, and began to shake him faster so that he would react. "*Diddy, Diddy, can you hear me?! Tell me you can still hear me, please!*"

"D-Dixie... I... can't anymore..." Diddy replied, straining his voice quite a bit while also beginning to struggle to keep his eyes open and even stop feeling so much pain in his wound.

"*No, Diddy, please no!*" Dixie exclaimed, calling him desperately as tears began to flow from her eyes. "*Diddy... please resist!... Diddy!*"

Dixie, with all the anguish and uncertainty, stood up again and tried to keep looking for what to do, at the same time that her tears kept coming out of her eyes. She peeked out of the door window and just saw the aisle of the aircraft with no exit. Then, she went to look out the other window to look outside and, by instinct of survival, she set out to try to find a way to open it, which was in vain since it had no mechanism to open or to break with the blows that she was giving it as a last alternative. Seconds later, Dixie stopped and saw only the sky and clouds moving... and without any hope of being able to do anything. Then, the aircraft continued with sudden turbulence that only increased the uncertainty in Dixie. With nothing else to do, Dixie sat down again in front of Diddy to continue helping him... even if she couldn't do anything for him either.

"Diddy... tell me you're not going to..." Dixie said before starting to sob and burst into tears completely. "Diddy...!"

Suddenly, with just a little bit of strength, Diddy took Dixie's hand while with the other one continued to hold his wound, and tried to look into her eyes, even if it was costing him.

"Dixie... I-I'm sorry..." he forced his voice to speak to her. "W-we can't... do... *nothing*. W-we won't return... to... *DK Island*."

Dixie looked up at him and only became more distressed at those words.

"*No, of course we still can!*" Dixie replied through tears and continuous sobs, even if she knew what Diddy said was true. "*I'm not going to leave without you! We have to go back! Everyone needs us there... Donkey needs you!*"

"D-Dixie, I..." Diddy pronounced, losing strength, beginning to drop her hand and closing his eyes, also with a couple of tears coming out of them.

"*No, Diddy! You have to resist! We could still do something!*" Dixie replied, holding him by the shoulders, but then losing strength to restrain herself while only seeing him in that state and thinking about the fact that they were both inside an aircraft... which was quite likely that at any moment it would stop with a fatal outcome. "*Diddy...*" she added, limiting herself to just hugging him and continuing to shed her tears next to him.

Diddy, with vision almost completely blurred and a few tears, looked at Dixie and then wrapped his arm around her, even if he no longer had the strength to do so.

"Dixie... I... I I-love you..." he uttered with his little strength.

But those words only made Dixie shed her tears faster, and she hugged him tighter as her crying grew louder.

"Me too... D-Diddy... I never stopped loving you..."

Diddy, without any drop of hope, stopped even exerting force with his hand that held his wound and hugged Dixie with both arms while she continued to emit hard sobs and tears upon she could not do anything more about it... They would only have to wait for the outcome.

"Uhh, No, no, no!" Dixie exclaimed, suddenly letting go of Diddy and trying to stop her crying. Then, she placed Diddy's hand on the folded sack on his wound again. "There still has to be a way, Diddy... I know there is!"

Suddenly, and as if some strength was coming back, Dixie stood up and went to peek out the door window while wiping away her tears.

"We have to get out of here! I'm going to get us out of here, Diddy!" she added, unlocking the door to open it and peek through it.

"Dixie!" Diddy exclaimed, as if he had also recovered the strength to speak. "No...! W-what... are you doing..."

"We are going to get out of here!" Dixie replied, still with tears streaming down her eyes. "I... promised everyone on DK Island that I would take you back; we said that in three weeks we would return to DK Island *and we will do it!*"

"Dixie!... Ugh..." Diddy replied, complaining of pain as he strained to speak while Dixie headed to help him one last time.

"Don't worry, Diddy... and don't force yourself," she said, taking his face. "I'll see if there's a way to get out of here... even if it's the last thing I can do... Resist, Diddy..."

With that said, Dixie gave Diddy a kiss on the cheek, before leaving him and walking out the door. Stronger turbulence than before was beginning to be felt, so Dixie would have to be careful when moving.

"Dixie..." was the last thing Diddy could utter when he saw her walk out that door.

Dixie began to walk through the aisle of the aircraft. She felt an enormous thirst for revenge towards the apes as never before and at the same time as she has always had towards them. Regaining some of her bravery, she felt ready to give one last beating to the two bad apes present, so she headed to them. Although... it became strange and suspicious to her that the apes had not yet stood up.

Then, she arrived right at the last area where the apes had been lying and, to great surprise... those two were still like this. Dixie rushed to snatch the gun from the orangutan and was ready to shoot them... When suddenly, she realized something curious: *the apes no longer wanted to move*, and even... taking a closer look at them, she saw that they also had *gunshot wounds*... and this time, they were no longer expelled from their skins. Dixie assumed that the immunizing effect had worn off.

"You... monkey!" the orangutan was suddenly heard speaking, who was lying on the floor and as if straining his voice.

Dixie was going to stop to give them some last shots, but a strong turbulent movement was enough to make her think she had to do something to stop the aircraft as a priority... In addition, the gun no longer had projectiles. So, she went to the main cockpit of the aircraft, where the dashboard and controls of it were... and where the pilot and co-pilot were injured on the floor and without having the strength to move, in addition to one of them having in his hands a communication device.

Dixie didn't have that much time, so she set out to inspect the aircraft controls to see if she could do anything to slow it down or even land... but it was obvious that Dixie didn't understand *anything* about those controls; there were so many buttons that she had no idea what they were for. She just moved the control yoke lightly as despair took hold of her again.

"Hey... I-leave that, little monkey!" the pilot exclaimed from the floor. "Don't move-"

Dixie had pressed a random button, which only caused strange noises in the aircraft that scared her away instantly. Suddenly, Dixie felt that someone grabbed her arm tightly.

"You're not going to be saved, brat girl!" the mandrill said, who had gathered strength to get up, even if he couldn't walk well.

Dixie immediately slapped him and began attacking him with all her anger after he hurt Diddy. She even gave him spinning attacks with her hair, making it difficult for the mandrill to see. But at one point, the mandrill grabbed Dixie's neck and smashed her into the cockpit dashboard, also activating several buttons on it and generating rumblings in the aircraft. Dixie hurriedly kicked the mandrill to make him let her go, and then continued to attack him. Amid the confrontation, both were bumping into the buttons of the cockpit, which began to generate sudden movements in the aircraft until it tilted down.

"NO...! Stop, apes, darn it!" the two human men yelled, straining their voices wide and in despair.

Dixie continued in the confrontation with the mandrill, until giving him a sudden blow to the head that left him stunned for a few seconds, but also smashed him against other buttons. Suddenly, the aircraft was tilting much more, at the same time that a noisy and continuous alarm was activated, which seemed to indicate that they would be in great danger. Dixie, the mandrill and the two men also stayed tilted with the aircraft until they collided with whatever was in front of them.

"Darn, we're falling!" one of the men yelled, unable to move. *"We are... FALLING!"*

Suddenly, the pilot man began to try to force himself up to take the yoke, although it seemed too late. The mandrill, on the other hand, had been lying on the floor.

Dixie, meanwhile, was leaning against the windshield, trying to move forward as the aircraft was accelerating downward and wobbling. She panicked as she thought about what to do and at the same time had nothing else to do; all she could think about was Diddy, so she gathered strength and began to spin her hair so she could move towards the aisle. She continued to strive to reach the last area, where Diddy had stayed.

Diddy was still leaning against one of the walls while holding his wound weakly. His eyes were closed and he could only open them a little when he saw Dixie reach him.

"Let's leave!" Dixie exclaimed desperately as she took Diddy to move him.

Dixie, having no choice, moved with Diddy to the same cage where they had been brought, and where the immobile Jenny's quartet was too. Then, she closed the door to secure it and just stayed by the side of the four kids while clutching Diddy to her.

Diddy, no longer having any idea what was going on, just looked at Dixie with his last efforts to keep his eyes open and, as if he got out of context for a while, raised his hand and caressed her cheek subtly while giving her a tender smile, before fading it and closing his eyes again. Suddenly, he also remembered Donkey, all the moments he spent with him... and even his first memories of when he was almost a baby came to mind... and even his parents' faces.

"D-Diddy?" Dixie said as she looked at him and also took his face when she saw that he had got motionless. *"Diddy!... Diddy, no-"*

Suddenly, a huge wobble was felt throughout the aircraft, and the movement became more and more accelerated. Dixie knew what was going to happen, so she just tried to keep Diddy safe and wrapped her arms around him to keep him protected... Several thoughts came to mind, including Tiny, Kiddy and Chunky, on how they would be and the last time she said goodbye to them on DK Island...

A couple of minutes later... a sudden, sharp movement was felt throughout the aircraft as if it had been impacted, along with an extremely loud rumble. Everything that contained the aircraft inside, rose instantly and wildly until jumping through the air. The cage where they were was no exception, which jumped and crashed into the roof of the aircraft and bounced a couple of times around the area. Dixie tried to help herself with her hair to avoid any bad blows, while keeping Diddy clinging without letting go at any time. The kids from Jenny's quartet bounced along with Diddy and Dixie inside the cage too, although they did not seem to suffer any damage and, between times, even served as protection for Diddy and Dixie.

Moments later, all movement was planted. Dixie, who kept her eyes closed tightly and clutching Diddy, was breathing heavily as she felt as if her entire life had passed over her. A while later, she opened her eyes little by little, still with the strong breathing. She had remained in a paralyzed state, but she was gradually recovering her senses. Afterwards, she looked at Diddy, who was with his eyes closed... and motionless at all, even having loosen his hand that held his wound. Dixie searched the folded sack again and immediately placed it on Diddy's wound and then tried to reanimate him.

"Diddy!" she called him, moving him to make him react... although this time it didn't happen. *"Diddy!... D-Diddy... look at me!... Diddy, wake up..."*

Dixie continued to try to reanimate him with increasing desperation, as her eyes shed tears again at the thought of the worst.

"Diddy... Please tell me something!" Dixie added, sobbing and dropping her tears continuously.

Suddenly, she remembered that maybe they wouldn't be flying in the aircraft anymore. She settled Diddy carefully, and then stood up to get out of the cage. When she looked better where they were, she noticed through the window that the sky could no longer be seen, but... some high parts of what appeared to be buildings. Dixie, still trying to keep herself with strength, opened the door of that cabin and what was there shocked her instantly: the aisle of the aircraft... had been divided in half and, as if that were not enough, both parts were floating on what appeared to be water. Dixie

immediately went out to inspect while the evening light was now present on the aircraft, aircraft which... had fallen on the sea, and was now floating in parts on it. Dixie took a look outside and realized that they were not so far from a beach in a city. She then hurried back to Diddy, where she tried again to reanimate him, shaking his shoulders and face desperately.

"Diddy, Diddy, please wake up!" Dixie exclaimed, hoping for one last answer from him. "Please, Diddy!... *Diddy! W-we have to go; we can get out of here now!*"

Dixie tried every possible way to wake Diddy up, even trying to open his eyes; now that they would have a way to escape from there, it was the best time for them to do so regardless of the obstacles. But with each passing second, Dixie only lost all hope and strength, as she progressively sobbed and teared as she saw that Diddy was no longer responsive.

"Diddy, talk to me!" she insisted as her tears even fell on him. "We have to get out of here!... *Diddy... t-tell me something... please!... D-Diddy...*"

Dixie just let her tears roll, as she watched Diddy distressingly without any trace of wanting to answer. She hugged him and was going to keep him held... When suddenly, she could hear some outside noises, which sounded like murmurs... and others as if they were engines. Trying to regain strength to stand up, Dixie went back to the door and peeked out of it. Suddenly, she was seeing what appeared to be some boats, which were stopping on the sides of the aircraft. Dixie took a closer look and noticed several people on board. Instantly, she turned around to run back into the cabin after one of those people had noticed her presence and started pointing at her.

"She went over there!" one of those people was heard saying on the outside.

Dixie locked herself back in the cage and held Diddy again, holding him to her as she began to tremble and panic; even if she knew that someone could help her in that terrible situation, she also did not feel in a position to have contact with a human, since she was not sure if it would be a good thing.

Suddenly, the cabin door opened, which alarmed Dixie and made her just clutch Diddy to her. Then, men dressed in full suits, helmets and visors entered, with a whole appearance that was enough to scare her.

"They're monkeys!" one of the men exclaimed before murmuring with the rest, who were bewildered.

"But how can there be monkeys here?! What were animals doing here?!"

"Call wildlife rescuers! *Right now!*" the first man who spoke added, heading to observe the cage up close where Diddy, Dixie and the motionless Jenny's quartet were. "It seems that they all are injured!"

Dixie was only quite fearful and in a position to protect Diddy at all costs, while the human men watched them fixed and detailed.

"But who could have been carrying wild animals on a flight?" one of the men exclaimed. "This aircraft is very suspicious."

Then, some of the gentlemen left the cabin to the outside, where they met other men wearing the same suits.

"What are you saying?!" one of the gentlemen exclaimed, showing shock. "An injured mandrill and orangutan?! Around here we also found a cage with six small primates, apparently all injured too!"

"What did you say?!" another of the men replied. "And what may be the reason for all this?"

"Gentlemen!" another man interrupted, arriving in a hurry. "We found survivors! There are two men who appear to be the pilot and the co-pilot; they have gunshot wounds, supposedly!"

Dixie, as she could hear the conversations, just kept trembling with fear and wanted to believe that the whole situation would still be just a nightmare, from which she would wake up at any moment. She still held Diddy in her arms without wanting to let go, while her breathing was continuously accelerated.

Suddenly, Dixie felt a slight movement in the cage and, when she looked at it better, she realized that the group of men in suits was carrying the cage to move it. Dixie started emitting primate squeals out of fear, as she didn't know what all of them were going to do and couldn't escape at that moment either.

"Don't worry, it's alright, little monkey!" one of the men said as they moved the cage.

"It seems that only that little female monkey is fine. The other ones don't move."

When going outside, Dixie caught sight in the distance how other gentlemen in suits were carrying on stretchers those who seemed to be the pilots who were on the flight, and later, she saw how they placed in boats the bodies of the mandrill and the orangutan who were on board too. In addition, there were also other people aboard boats with cameras pointing towards the area. Later, the gentlemen who carried the cage, placed it in a boat and, a couple of minutes later, the latter began to accelerate in the direction of the beach.

Then, a long, overwhelming few minutes passed for Dixie, even though it hadn't been many. She no longer knew what could happen and just kept herself in an empty state, while holding Diddy and still trying to hold his wound.

Later, the boat had stopped next to a pier, near the beach area. The men rushed to disembark the cage and move it to another point. Dixie was still paralyzed, and just closed her eyes so she wouldn't see what would happen. When suddenly... she heard the cage open and a few extra murmurs, which put her on alert instantly.

"But they're little ones," an additional voice was heard in front of the cage. "Okay, let's see..."

Dixie opened her eyes and now saw a group of people dressed in long white suits and carrying a kind of suitcases with tools... Suddenly, one of these people came closer to the cage and tried to take Diddy, which made Dixie alert and prevented those people from touching him, even making a gesture of disgust.

"No, no, don't worry, little one," the man who was trying to take Diddy said. "We're not going to hurt you; we just want to see how you all are."

Dixie, quite suspicious of these people, kept holding Diddy and trying to get the hands off from those who were trying to take them both. She even got defensive so as not to let them touch Jenny's quartet either.

"Come on, don't be afraid; we need to see how that monkey is. He doesn't seem fine," another person added. "We'll try to help you, okay?"

Dixie was still fearful, but those people tried to calm her down and kept telling her that they had no bad intentions with them and, on the contrary, they were trying to help them. With a few attempts later, Dixie began to give in to those people and allowed them to take Diddy, although she still held his hand while the people placed him on a small stretcher. Then, people observed Diddy in detail and, seeing the wound he had, made a shocking gesture and were somewhat horrified.

"Holy heavens, he is very wounded!" one of the gentlemen exclaimed, showing concern. "Seems... like he has *been shot*; it doesn't appear to be a wound from the accident."

"But how could a little injured monkey have come on a flight?" another of the gentlemen present asked while looking for something in the suitcase he brought and took out some objects to use them on Diddy. "Anyway, this seems to be something serious. We have to take the little monkey to the emergency room; he still seems to have vital signs. How are the other little monkeys, by the way?!"

"The little female monkey appears to be stable," another of the people said, examining Dixie. "She only seems to have a few scratches and bumps, but she's the only one that looks fine. She's a chimpanzee, in fact."

"Oh, by all the holy heavens!" another of the people behind Dixie exclaimed.

Dixie turned to look and saw that the other people in that group had taken Jenny, Mandy, Ricky and Melvyn in their arms, looking quite worried to see them.

"I think these little primates... could not be saved," one of the people commented, holding Jenny as examining her. "The four of them have their eyes open and static... and don't seem to have a heartbeat anymore."

"It can't be, poor creatures," another of the people added, looking sad.

"Wait a minute, but this is strange," another person said, who was examining Melvyn and watching him strangely. "These chimpanzees... don't have any scratches or a wound. They look totally healthy despite having no vital signs."

"Let's take them anyway; we have to examine them all," the man who was helping Diddy added, who had placed some objects in his wound and near his nose and mouth. "Let's go fast!"

Then, the group of people packed their things and carried in their arms the kids from Jenny's quartet, Diddy on a stretcher and Dixie in their arms too, although she was still somewhat fearful, but at the same time beginning to calm down after seeing the kindness and serenity with which those people were treating them, although after all, she had nothing else to do in that situation.

The group of people were taking them to what appeared to be a vehicle with a small container in the back, in which they introduced them all along with some of those people to accompany them. Seconds later, the vehicle began to start and then accelerate...

Chapter 76: Unease

"But what are you saying?!... How is that possible?!"

"The flight appeared to be clandestine, in fact. They have not yet been able to find any legal identification or proof of where it came from."

A group of people wearing clothes of what they seemed to be doctors, stood in the middle of corridors with white and yellow walls. They all showed expressions of having witnessed something unexpected while recounting it.

"How many of those primates were on board?"

"So far, they have found eight: an adult male mandrill and orangutan, the other six were young, among them: a male spider monkey, three female chimpanzees and two male chimpanzees... Although among those little ones, only the spider monkey and a chimpanzee have been confirmed to be still alive."

"What a pity for the other four little ones; they could not be saved... And what happened to the two men who were on board too?"

"They were taken to the hospital too; they're very injured... and not just because of the accident; there are suspicions that there was some kind of shooting inside that flight..."

Suddenly... loud and rowdy murmurs were heard inside the place and alerted the people present.

"STOP THEM! THEY RUN AWAY!" someone was heard screaming and running.

Suddenly, in one of the perpendicular corridors, four kong children could be seen running at full speed while a group of people was chasing them, although it was in vain, since these children were quite agile. They were two chimpanzee boys and two girls, who seemed to want to flee from that place.

"No! It can't be! They could escape to the city!" one of the people exclaimed, panicking.

"But what happened?!" one of the people in the hallway asked.

"Those four little chimpanzees we thought were dead ran away... And they're not dead! In fact... we don't know what they are; we find very strange things in them."

That quartet of kongs had come out from a door that led to a room. This room also had white walls with pastel yellow coatings, where more people, between men and women, were in white suits, and who handled certain tools. Inside the room, there were several devices and small rolling stretchers... On one of the latter, Dixie was sitting while being treated by two of the people, who were putting bandages on certain parts of her, since she had some blows that she had not noticed due to the adrenaline she felt in the tragic situation.

On the sides of where she was, there was another stretcher where Diddy was lying, and where two other people were treating him and placing strange devices on him. Dixie kept an eye on what they

were doing to Diddy; even if those people had told her they were going to help them, she didn't want to trust it completely yet.

"They ran away!" another of the people exclaimed, entering the room with others. "We don't find them."

"Oh, it can't be!" one of the people who was helping Dixie replied, showing concern. "Those four chimpanzees were very strange. I don't understand how they got up while we were examining them, I mean... just by seeing them, it could be deduced that they were lifeless, even though *they did not have any injuries*."

"But they must not have gone far, they must be hidden somewhere in this clinic... I don't understand what all this situation is about."

"News will provide more details about the plane crash later. Some suggest this may be a matter related to wildlife trafficking."

"And what about the mandrill and orangutan that were also on board?"

"They were already taken straight to the operating room; they were seriously injured, just like this spider monkey."

Dixie, while still watching what they did to Diddy and also to her, only stood with an empty and dull expression, wondering how all that had happened in such a short time; two days ago, she was on Hurricane Island just trying to find out how Jemky's quartet had learned of their whereabouts. She was also concerned about Jenny's quartet, who had recently fled the room after being examined by those people; if only she could tell the people that those four children were actually mechanized, and that it was evident that they no longer had a life of their own.

"Alright, we can take the little monkey to the operating room now," one of the people who was treating Diddy said. "And it must be fast; his chances of life don't seem so high either."

Then, a group of people began to move the stretcher where they had Diddy to take him out of the room. Instantly, Dixie became alert and hurriedly got up to stop them, but the other people immediately held her down.

"No, no, calm down, calm down, little one!" one of the people said, stopping her. "The monkey is going to be fine; they're going to save him."

Dixie continued to resist them as she saw Diddy being taken out of that room. She tried to free herself from those people and run after Diddy, but the people didn't allow her.

"Stay still!... Stay still!" one of the people insisted, holding her until she was immobilized, to which Dixie emitted primate squeals as she tried to point at Diddy. "Yes, yes, yes, the little monkey will be fine, don't worry!... They're just going to cure him; he's going to be fine."

Dixie kept insisting on wanting to go after him in her kong language, while still pointing to the door where Diddy had been taken out.

"He'll be fine, he'll be fine," one of the people added, also trying to gesture to Dixie. "See... They are going to *heal* that *wound* that the little monkey has, and for that they will do something to him that is too disturbing for you to see."

Dixie, ignoring them, suddenly jumped off the stretcher and started running towards the door.

"Hey, no, come here!" the people exclaimed, heading to try to reach her.

Dixie walked out of the ward and set out to follow the people who had taken Diddy away. She ran at such a speed that it didn't take long for her to catch up with them. Immediately, she climbed up to the stretcher where Diddy was, causing a small scare to the people who moved him.

"Hey, watch out!" one of the people exclaimed before taking Dixie. "No, no, don't move anything! Go back to where you were, little one!"

Dixie waved her feet in the air and stretched her arms to catch up with Diddy, while the people held her in their arms. Then, the other people arrived and took Dixie, even if she kept putting up resistance as they took Diddy away again.

"Calm down now!" the person holding her replied, holding her arms. "You can't go there, it's dangerous!"

Dixie breathed heavily, giving them a look of pleading and disagreement towards those people.

"Oh... well, okay," the one who held her said. "Well, we'll take you *just a while* to see where they'll take the monkey, okay?"

The person holding Dixie gave her an authoritative look that later turned into a smile as if trying to calm her down. Dixie, still looking suspiciously, finally stood still as the person began to walk with her in the direction of where Diddy had been taken.

A minute later, they had reached a large door with small windows on top. The person lifted Dixie so that she could look out of these windows, through which she could observe another room where there were more devices, lamps and a larger stretcher... where they had Diddy on it. A group of people in white suits and some kinds of protective eyewear were preparing some tools and examining Diddy, who had had his cap and shirt removed as they began to tend to his wound. Dixie panicked and became restless again before trying to push the door in, but was stopped by the person holding her.

"No! You can't get in there!" the person said, holding her arms. "Your friend, the little monkey, is going to be fine. They are going to save him and the monkey will recover," he added, speaking in a sweet tone as if he were talking to an infant.

Dixie only made a gesture of anger and concern as she insisted with her gaze on wanting to enter.

"Oh, let's do this then," the person said. "Let's go over there."

That person went with Dixie in his arms to a door that was ahead, and they entered a new room. This room, of the same colors as the previous ones, had a few tables and chairs beside a couple of rolling stretchers. The person placed Dixie in one of the latter and took her to a huge window in that room. This window showed the room where they had Diddy for intervening him.

"From here you can see your little friend, do you want to stay here?" the person asked, who seemed to deduce Dixie's answer after she did not hesitate to lean out of the window and watch Diddy carefully. "Okay, I'll let you be here, but only on one condition: *don't try to enter that room*, it's for your sake and the sake of the little monkey."

Suddenly, Dixie saw how one of the people was inserting an object into Diddy's wound, which immediately alarmed her and began to bang on the window as if she wanted to enter.

"No, no, calm down! Don't do that!" the person exclaimed, stopping her arms. "*They're not* hurting him; they're just going to *heal* that wound he has... I told you: it was going to be something disturbing for you to see."

Dixie just gave another distressed look as she slid her hands on the window glass, and then turned around shuddering as she saw how Diddy was being intervened again.

"Oh, no, try not to look so long there... Or if you want, we go back to the previous room, do you want to?" he said, taking her in his arms again, but Dixie refused to go and preferred to stay on that stretcher next to the huge window. "Okay, okay, you can stay here. Only one thing... I recommend you don't look too much toward that room, okay?"

Dixie nodded weakly as the person gave her a cozy little smile. Then, that person walked to the door.

"Your little friend is in good hands, don't worry, little girl," he said, smiling at her, before retiring and closing the door.

Dixie was silent for a while upon she was left alone in that room. Then, curiosity invaded her and she turned to look again at the room where Diddy was being intervened. She stared for a long time at what that group of people did to him, where between moments, she had to cover her eyes and make gestures of pain.

"Don't forget to save this projectile; they'll come to ask for it for investigations later," one of those people was heard saying behind the window, who was intervening Diddy. "Holy heavens, this little monkey is in very bad conditions; we must hurry or he could die."

Those words only made Dixie shudder and worry more, who was only filling herself with overwhelming thoughts as she watched how they intervened Diddy. She wished she could enter, but she was trying to trust that she should just wait for those people to do the work; after all, there was nothing else she could do. Later, she turned to stop looking behind the window, and sat on the stretcher with a low look, while her eyes began to moisten until she expelled a couple of tears and emitted a few light sobs.

Suddenly, Dixie turned again to look out the window, but had to turn instantly when she saw what they were doing with Diddy. Without nothing else to do, Dixie hugged her legs and rested her head on her knees as she let her tears fall and thought about everything that had happened... Starting with that day where she left DK Island to search for Diddy. She remembered how she had set out to find Diddy and return with him to the island immediately; she never imagined how heavy the rest of the journey would become... She thought about how calm she was with Diddy on DK Island... and even how happy they would be if they had started their love story on the same DK Island without so many problems and acting better to tell each other things.

"Diddy..." she whispered as she progressively shed her tears, before turning for one last time to look into the room where he was being treated, but looked away instantly. "D-Diddy..."

Dixie began to sob and shed continuous tears as she felt enormous pain inside; she wished more than ever to close her eyes and wake up on DK Island... along with Diddy. She didn't know how that situation could end now; from just thinking about the worst, she sobbed harder as she tried to

dry her tears. If Diddy were to have a bad outcome, Dixie wouldn't know what to do; her world would have fallen apart... similar to what happened to her when her parents departed that world; in fact, Dixie recalled that at that time she was in the same way: waiting for long and overwhelming hours that they could be saved, which... it didn't happen. Dixie was only consumed by the thought that she would never see Diddy awake again, and if so, she would not know how to return to DK Island in the midst of that situation... First of all, she didn't even know what place both were now.

Finally, she began to recall several moments with Diddy. She remembered the emotion that caused her to start a story with him, she remembered all the illusion she had upon being able to spend wonderful moments together, she remembered how beautiful it was to be in the company of him as if time were only for the two of them, she also remembered... how their love bond had been broken, even though things had already been clarified. Now she only cared that Diddy could turn out well, which she did not have high hopes for. Dixie never wanted things with Diddy to end like this; first of all, she wouldn't even have wanted them to have to go from a circus to an island far from home in order to be together... let alone get to where they were now. Each thought only tormented Dixie more and made her shed more tears without being able to stop her crying.

A few minutes later, her eyes still in tears, Dixie lay down until she tried to get some sleep, even if it wouldn't be easy to get it...

Chapter 77: Preoccupations

Dixie had her eyes closed as she finished plunging into a deep sleep; she had hardly slept at all for two days. Suddenly, she regained her sense of reality and began to open her eyes little by little. She got up calmly as she sat up and rubbed her eyes, which were quite blurry at first. Then, she opened her eyes to the fullest when she realized where she was. She turned to look at the window immediately... although this time, she saw no trace of Diddy or anyone inside that room...

"Oh, you've woken up, little chimpanzee," someone said suddenly.

Dixie turned to look and realized that it was just another of the doctor-looking people, who was present in that same room. This person also carried a kind of tray with pieces of fruit, which he took to Dixie.

"Take this, it's for you. You must be hungry," the person said, smiling kindly.

Dixie gave a doubtful look at first, but then picked up one of those pieces of fruit, including banana, and proceeded to taste some. Those foods tasted great, so she continued to try them; she hadn't eaten anything in even a little over twenty-four hours.

"By the way, little girl, I have some news that might *cheer you up a little*," the person said, smiling at her, which caught Dixie's attention instantly as she continued to eat. "Well, he's not *all* fine yet, but... your little friend, the monkey, has been saved."

Dixie made a shocked gesture instantly as she felt an acceleration in her heartbeat. She turned again to look into the room where they had intervened Diddy previously and then looked at the person, gesturing as if asking where he was.

"Oh, no, no, he's not there anymore," the person commented. "They took him to another room; he has to stay and rest there... I'll take you so you can see him, do you want to?"

Dixie hurriedly finished her meal before nodding her head as a sign of confirmation.

Later, the person took her in his arms and carried her out of the room through the corridors. Dixie was eager to see Diddy; she felt a little air of hope coming back, and she couldn't wait to see him awake again... It was what she was most looking forward to. On the way, Dixie noticed through the windows of the corridors that it was still night hours.

Then, the person who carried her, began to climb some stairs until they reached a second floor, where he continued walking through the corridors there. Later, he entered with her into another room with all white walls, where there were several rolling stretchers of different sizes. In the end, a group of people were observed inspecting a couple of the stretchers, where perhaps there were some animals in them.

Suddenly, Dixie opened her eyes to the fullest when she saw on one of the first stretchers Diddy, who was lying with some kinds of devices connected to certain parts of his body such as arms, chest or nose, and was with a sheet around his feet. A pair of people were also around Diddy, apparently examining him. Dixie was instantly excited and showed as if she wanted to catch up with him, but the person was holding her. The only problem she had... it was that she still didn't see Diddy *awake*; he remained completely motionless, which again discouraged Dixie.

The person carried Dixie to the stretcher where Diddy was, and allowed her to stand on it for a closer look. Dixie looked at Diddy with some uncertainty, before turning to look at the people next to her.

"No, don't worry, the little monkey is fine," one of the people said, examining Diddy, giving her a smile. "Fortunately, they were able to save him. But he still has to recover, so for now he won't wake up until even tomorrow or the day after. He has to continue to rest and has to be taken care of."

Dixie didn't seem to fully understand the matter, but she was beginning to have a little more confidence in those people; after all, there had been improvements in the situation so far.

"By the way, how was the mandrill and the orangutan's surgery?" one of the people asked.

"Their surgeries were successful too," another person replied... before pointing to the stretchers in the end. "They're already recovering there as well."

"Oh, thank heavens. So, everything is fine," one of the people commented with a relieved smile.

Hearing that, Dixie froze for a few seconds as her palpitations accelerated and she began to be consumed with anger and resentment again. Suddenly, she grumbled and jumped off the stretcher to go at a brisk pace to where the two apes were, but the people chased her instantly, noticing that behavior in her.

"Hey, no! Come here!"

Dixie had reached to get on the stretcher where they had the mandrill in the same way as Diddy; she was in all the position of wanting to attack him, but unfortunately for her, people rushed to stop her by holding her torso and limbs.

"*Stay still, little chimp!*" one of the people ordered her as they held her, while she waved her feet in the air continuously. "No, *don't do that!* Calm down!"

Dixie, being under the spiteful feeling towards the apes, continued to put up resistance and tried to stretch her arms towards the mandrill.

"No, stay still, calm down!" the person said, taking her back to the stretcher where Diddy was, even if Dixie continued to insist and even make signs of wanting to attack the apes.

"Geez, why did this little chimpanzee suddenly behave that way toward those apes?"

While they put Dixie back on the stretcher where Diddy was, she continued to be extremely furious, emitting squeals and even beginning to make gestures in order to try to explain to the people that those apes were evil and, above all, pointed to the apes and then to Diddy, as if trying to explain that they were the ones who had hurt him... But unfortunately, Dixie couldn't explain herself well, and people didn't grasp what she meant exactly.

"It seems that this chimpanzee doesn't get along with those two large apes, or at least that's what I see she's implying," one of the people said. "I think we'd better move her to another room, even to the little monkey."

Then, the people next to Diddy and Dixie, began to push the stretcher with Diddy on it, and also carried Dixie in their arms out of that room. Dixie only showed a face of indignation as she looked with a deep hatred towards apes, but she had to keep her composure in front of those people.

Seconds later, the people had moved both to another room, which was almost the same as the previous one, but this one was smaller for just five recovery stretchers. They placed the stretcher with Diddy on it and parked it in one of the stalls. Dixie was also placed on one of the stretchers, although she was not fitted with any device.

"Now, you both will be calm here," one of the people commented. "We must secure the door when we come out, just in case."

"What happened to the other four little chimpanzees that escaped this afternoon, by the way?" another of the people asked.

"They have hidden very well; they still could not be found. Although no one has claimed that they have seen them go outside, so they must be somewhere in this clinic. We even put food in the primate recreational area, in case they go there because of hunger."

Afterwards, people continued to examine Diddy and others did the same with Dixie, whom they only examined her slight wounds and bruises and also changed her bandages. During the process, Dixie only felt enormous frustration; the fact that two of the evil apes were also being treated was something that was worrying her, as she didn't want to imagine what else would happen if they fully recovered. Besides, she didn't know how to explain to those people what those apes really were, and that maybe it would be a danger if they were helping them too, besides wanting to say that it was the apes who had hurt Diddy. She did not know what would have become of the rest of the bad apes and Jemky's quartet either; perhaps those tamers would have already killed them as they said, but that would be reason enough for the two apes who were recovering in that place to want to take revenge or something like that.

"It seems that everything is fine with them so far," one of the people commented, finishing examining Dixie while the others were on the same with Diddy. "We can let them rest easy now."

Later, people began to put away their tools, and went to the door to leave. Dixie immediately went to Diddy's stretcher to check on him, prompting one of the people back to stop her.

"Oh, no, no, be careful," the person said as Dixie was touching the devices Diddy had been put on. "Don't touch anything from here; they're part of the recovery of the little monkey. Don't worry, if the monkey is taken care of enough, it's quite likely that he'll wake up in a short time. For now... you just have to wait, okay?"

Dixie only gave a serious look at the person, before she took her back to the other stretcher.

"Now, try to sleep, little chimpanzee," the person said with a smile and patting her lightly on the head. "You both are going to recover."

With that said, the person withdrew from the room and left them both alone.

Dixie stood for a while looking at the door and then at Diddy. Afterwards, though more carefully on this occasion, she went to his stretcher, and stood looking at him for a long time while he still stood with his eyes closed and motionless. Although they had already explained enough to her,

Dixie did not fully understand the process that the people there, who were now known to be doctors, were doing, but she wanted to think that it would be something that could help them both.

Then, trying not to move any of the devices Diddy had, Dixie tried to settle down to be by his side, and placed her hand on his for a while. She just hoped that Diddy would wake up soon, as she had been told, and both would leave that place to resume the search for DK Island... or Hurricane Island, alternatively.

"Diddy..." Dixie said, looking at him with some sadness and caressing his hand, "recover... please... I just want to see you again," she added as a couple of tears rolled down her cheeks and wiped them simultaneously. "W-we have to return to DK Island..."

Dixie tried to restrain herself, but couldn't help but shed other tears upon looking at Diddy; even if she had been told that he had enough stability, she could not deny that the uncertainty about whether or not he would wake up was stronger... That had already happened to her before with her loved ones.

"Don't go, Diddy... please," she added as her tears continued to flow and she gave light sobs in silence. "Please... Diddy..."

Then, having calmed down a bit, Dixie stayed another while with Diddy while holding his hand or caressing his face between times. Even if she had been told that she had to wait some time for Diddy to wake up, she still wished that, even if just for a moment, Diddy would look at her and talk to her again to tell her that he was fine; she couldn't wait any longer to hear him and see his eyes.

Later, Dixie was starting to doze next to Diddy, so she decided to get off the stretcher to go lie down on hers. She settled in as best she could and closed her eyes to try to sleep... but not before looking at Diddy for one last time, hoping to see him awake as soon as she woke up too...

Chapter 78: One Last Vengeance

Dixie was lying on the stretcher. Suddenly, her eyes began to open a little after she had plunged into a deep state of sleep. Then, as if suddenly, she opened her eyes in one fell swoop and didn't know why, but... she felt an urgent need to get up while having some acceleration in her heartbeat. She wasn't going to take it so seriously... if not for the fact that she heard a slight but sudden noise outside the room, which immediately triggered her curiosity.

She decided to get off her stretcher before checking to see if Diddy was fine. Then, still with some curiosity, she went to the door and leaned her ear against it... She could clearly hear some strange noises in the corridors outside. Although after all, she assumed that they would be more of the medical people who might be around... if it weren't for the fact that, a few seconds later, she began to hear certain murmurs accompanied by knocking on a door. And, as if that were not enough, Dixie jumped out of fright when she heard a knock on the door of the same room where she was, at the same time that the knob seemed to be moving. She began to have a bad feeling, so she just stood still until she no longer heard any noise behind the door; she knew that if it were any of the doctors, they wouldn't have to knock like that.

A couple of minutes later, Dixie felt enormous uncertainty and, as stealthily as she could, turned the doorknob, deactivating the latch and slowly opening it until she could poke her head out. The lights in the corridors were off and barely any lighting came through the windows.

Suddenly... Dixie opened her eyes to the fullest when, in a certain corner of the corridor, she could see silhouettes taller than her. Those silhouettes were next to one of the walls, more specific... at the door of the previous room where Diddy and Dixie had been taken.

"It doesn't open," one of those figures was heard whispering as they tried to open the door.

Dixie began to breathe heavily after hearing the voice of the silhouette that spoke... *That was not possible*. Suddenly, within seconds, one of those silhouettes turned to look in Dixie's direction, which put her on alert instantly.

"It's the brat chimpanzee!" one of the figures exclaimed, this time letting his voice be heard clearly.

Dixie hid in the room again and closed the door as quickly as she could, securing it immediately. The palpitations in her heart had been activated severely and she trembled continuously when she saw that those silhouettes belonged to the *very apes*; in this case... the lead orangutan along with the two remaining mandrills, those in blue and red lapels. Dixie wondered too desperately how those apes could have gotten there... and that would mean a *serious* danger.

Suddenly, the door to that room began to be knocked on again repeatedly.

"*Darn it, she has secured it!*" one of the apes was heard saying, struggling with the knob. "It doesn't open!"

"Or let's shoot instead to see if the lock gets deactivated."

The palpitations and tension in Dixie increased upon hearing that; now they would be in severe danger. A couple of seconds later, a loud gunshot was heard that even went through the door. Dixie

immediately pulled away, away from the door, and the first thing she did was stand next to the stretcher where Diddy was while thinking about what she could do now.

"Almost done!" another of them was heard saying as they continued to fire shots at the door. "Make way, I'm going to open it!"

Suddenly, the door was being beaten more aggressively as if it were going to be knocked down. Until a few seconds later... the apes managed to create a large enough entrance and where they began to enter one by one, all with a gun in hand.

"So, here you are, girl!" the lead orangutan exclaimed, pointing at her.

"Oh, and the little monkey was attacked," one of the mandrills added, pointing in Diddy's direction.

Dixie climbed onto Diddy's stretcher and stood in front of him in a defensive position while looking extremely seriously at the apes, even if she felt an enormous panic to see them armed, in front of her who had nothing to attack them.

"Wow, I thought you weren't here," the lead orangutan said, staring at her. "We didn't come here for you, in fact. We were coming for our two mates who escaped to go look for you both; I thought they had already killed you two. But since you're here now..." he added as they lifted their weapons."

"Hey, hey, w-wait, wait...!" Dixie stuttered, struggling not to get blank. "L-look, I know we ruined your p-plans, but I swear I didn't know... that you did everything for those t-tamers."

The apes began to place their fingers on the triggers, so Dixie hurriedly jumped to the floor and pushed one of the stretchers at the apes to push them away. Immediately, Dixie took Diddy's stretcher and pushed it rolling towards the door... but not before the apes opened fire and managed to shoot one of the devices that was connected to Diddy. Luckily, Dixie managed to leave the room in a hurry, and started running while rolling Diddy's stretcher through the corridor.

"*COME BACK HERE, GIRL!*" the apes shouted as they opened fire again in the direction of Diddy and Dixie.

Dixie had managed to turn into another corridor in time, although unfortunately, the apes managed to shoot another of Diddy's devices. Dixie hid in a corner of the corridors to stop to process what was happening; she wanted to think that everything was a nightmare. Suddenly, she noticed that the device the apes had shot to was spilling a liquid, which alarmed her, as she assumed it might aggravate Diddy's state. She thought about going to the doctors for help, but at the same time, she knew that with armed wild apes it would be very risky to endanger other individuals.

"I heard them over here!" a voice was heard nearby.

Dixie opened her eyes to the fullest when she heard clearly that those voices... *didn't seem to belong to the apes*, but... *other* ones she wished not to see again anymore. She left the corner where she was, trying to keep Diddy safe, and peeked out the corner of a wall.

"Darn it, those apes must be carrying our guns!" one of those figures said as he ran through the corridor. "We have to stop them, take the two apes that infiltrated the flight and clean up any darn evidence!"

Dixie immediately hid as she continued to stealthily watch the figures pass through that corridor. Her breathing and palpitations were racing to the extreme when she realized that... it was the very *circus tamers*. Dixie no longer knew if her mind was playing tricks on her and it would be a nightmare. She would escape at that very moment from that place with Diddy, if not for the fact that he was still asleep and had to recover under strict care. But she had to stand their ground, she had to do something about it, otherwise... things could end up worse.

Very carefully, and checking that no one was around, Dixie pushed Diddy's stretcher again and rolled it through the corridors, looking for a good hiding place for him first of all. Suddenly... he felt a sudden collision with the stretcher.

"But what the heck?!" a sudden childish voice was heard. "It can't be!"

Upon seeing better, Dixie realized that she had in front *Jemky's quartet*, who were dumbfounded at first... and with guns in hand too.

"It's the monkeys!" Melenky exclaimed. "I thought they were already dead!"

Without thinking any longer, Dixie pushed the stretcher against the four of them as if she wanted to run over them, and continued to run through the corridor until she could reach the next one.

"Don't let them escape!" Rocky exclaimed as they prepared their guns and aimed where Dixie had gone with Diddy.

"Hey, but the monkey is already dead or what?" Mandrew asked as they ran.

"No, maybe he just got hurt from that flight," Jemky replied. "At least that's what we hear those tamers say about what they saw on the TV news."

Dixie continued to run at full speed with the stretcher. Her adrenaline was so great that she had to fight not to be consumed by the desperation of not knowing what to do. She couldn't believe that almost all the enemies were present there.

Later, after a long and exhausting route, Dixie found a point where she thought she could hide Diddy; she didn't know what area it was but at least she wanted to think it would be safe to leave him there. When suddenly...

"*Stop there, girl!*" the group of three adult apes appeared, pointing at them. "*Stay still!*"

Dixie hurried to detour to another corridor with the stretcher; she felt an enormous frustration that she could not hide Diddy, since it was an extremely risky situation to have him in sight of the enemy groups and at the same time leave him alone.

"*Here they are!*" Jemky's quartet appeared by surprise at the corner of a corridor.

Dixie had to rush to detour again. She reached an intersection of corridors until, when she reached one of the corners, she collided with a tall silhouette.

"It's the disastrous monkeys!" one of the tamers said, appearing with his group by surprise.

Dixie, for the third time, looked for a place to detour. When, to bad luck, where she was going, the apes came, who rushed to aim at them.

"Don't move, mon-"

"The apes!" the tamers interrupted, also coming in the opposite direction.

Suddenly... the tamers began to open fire and shot in directions close to the apes, while the apes rushed to shoot at them. Both groups were hiding in the corners of the corridors between times.

"Now you'll see, you darn apes!" the one-eyed tamer exclaimed, who, unlike the other two ones, carried a weapon of tranquilizer darts.

The one-eyed tamer seemed to want to put the apes to sleep, whom he was trying to shoot. But at the same time, the apes were trying to shoot them back.

"Where are those monkeys?!" Jemky's quartet appeared on the scene.

"It's those little brats!" the one-eyed tamer exclaimed as he noticed the quartet.

"What?!" Jemky exclaimed.

"Hide, boys!" the lead orangutan ordered in the distance.

Suddenly, another shooting began... This time between the tamers with the apes. Both sides emitted projectiles in the air, which passed near where Dixie was with Diddy. Dixie had placed herself in a position to protect Diddy and, trying to go unnoticed, immediately went down and continued to take the stretcher to a safe point, escaping the battle scene. She did not even understand the sudden firefight between the two sides, since she thought they would rather be allies.

"The chimpanzee is escaping with the monkey!" one of the apes exclaimed, pointing to them in the middle of the shooting.

Dixie ran as fast as her legs gave her to run and her hands to push the stretcher. Suddenly, on the way, she saw a door opening in the side wall, through which some of the doctors of that place came into view. Dixie almost collided with those people, but managed to pass successfully, but not before emitting squeals to them as a sign that they should hide due to the violent scene that had been created.

"But what is all this?!" one of the people exclaimed. *"The chimpanzee is taking the monke-"*

Suddenly, gunshots rang out in that corridor, which had come from two of the apes who were chasing Dixie. Instantly, people hid again and closed the door, frightened at the sudden scene.

"What's all this?!" one of the people behind the door was heard yelling. *"Why do those apes have guns?!"*

"I don't know, call emergency services, QUICK! QUICK! AND DON'T LET ANYONE OUT FOR NOW!"

Dixie continued to run and turn into random routes. She considered running away from that place with Diddy, but she also didn't know if it would be a right choice because of the state he was in.

"I found you, brat!" the lead orangutan appeared, pointing at her.

Dixie hurriedly pushed him with the stretcher and ignored him, before turning into another corridor in time. Suddenly, she began to run into several of the enemies in different parts, as if they had all dispersed, which further increased the tension in her.

The group of tamers seemed to be trying to catch both Diddy and Dixie and the apes... In fact, they talked along the way as if they wanted to get rid of *all* of them and leave no *traces*.

"These darn apes!" one of the tamers exclaimed very furious. "After we came to take the two wounded apes to erase evidence, the others came to make it worse!"

"And that pair of disastrous monkeys! We must get rid of them now or we'll be in trouble with the law!"

On the other hand, the apes were wanting to catch up with Diddy and Dixie. Jemky's quartet was in the same way... although they were somewhat more disoriented, and each one was in the company of one of the adult apes.

"I think I saw the little monkey girl over there!" the red-lapel mandrill said, who was running alongside Melenky. "At any moment she must appear anyway!"

"What about those tamers?" Melenky asked, showing insecurity.

"We just shouldn't let them see us."

Suddenly, the one-armed tamer appeared by surprise in front of the mandrill and Melenky, so they turned into another corridor they had on the sides, and continued to flee.

"Darn, those tamers are not going to let us exterminate those *two monkeys* at will!" the mandrill complained on the way.

"We should better have fled elsewhere!" Melenky replied. "Why do we still want those mon..."

Suddenly, Melenky was interrupted at the same time that a gunshot was heard. The red-lapel mandrill immediately turned to look... and noticed that Melenky had fallen to the floor.

"*Melenky!*" the mandrill exclaimed as soon as he saw the langur boy lying down, and hurried to his aid. "*What happened-*"

Upon closer inspection, the mandrill realized that Melenky had a *wound*, which appeared to be from a gunshot.

"*Ouhh... I-I think that...*" Melenky exclaimed in a forced voice as if complaining of pain.

"*Keep calm, keep calm son!*" the mandrill exclaimed with a tone of desperation taking him in his arms and helping him. In fact, this time... the wound was not healing as before. "*Keep calm, Daddy is here-*"

"We got you, *darned apes!*" the one-armed tamer appeared, pointing with his only arm at them and about to shoot them. "*This time you won't-*"

Suddenly, two shots in a row rang out... The mandrill had rushed to take his gun and shoot at the tamer, knocking him to the floor. But a few seconds later, the latter also managed to hold his gun and fired a shot at the mandrill, which landed in his arm.

"Urgh!... You scoundrel!" the mandrill exclaimed, clutching his arm in pain. *"But you won't hurt my son, you darned!"*

Suddenly, the one-armed tamer on the floor, still seemed to have some strength and aimed at the mandrill again, but the latter returned other shots more, hurried to take Melenky and fled from there as he could, before the tamer fired unsuccessfully... and then got motionless on the floor.

On the other hand, Dixie was still running and hiding from enemies along with Diddy's stretcher. She didn't even have the time to find a hiding place for him and she couldn't leave him alone either. She kept running as fast as she could until she became desperate not knowing how the whole situation would end. Suddenly, she arrived at an intersection of corridors, where she had to think quickly which of the two routes to take. Until...

"I got you, girl!" the lead orangutan appeared along with Jemky, both pointing at her.

Dixie, ignoring all risk, turned into the other direction, when for bad luck, the blue-lapel mandrill appeared along with Mandrew and Rocky, blocking her from running. Even still, Dixie was going to turn to go back the way she came from... until she saw the other mandrill approaching with Melenky in his arms.

"Stay still now!" the lead orangutan ordered, placing his finger on the trigger. "From here you won't-"

"Hey... hey, wait!" the red-lapel mandrill interrupted, arriving with Melenky in his arms. *"It's Melenky... He was..."*

"Terry?! Melenky?!" the lead orangutan and the other mandrill exclaimed, looking shocked.

Everyone seemed to have ceased fire, and stopped to look at the red-lapel mandrill in a state as if he was complaining of pain as he spoke. Then, he placed Melenky on the floor, who was complaining of pain as well... and with a recent wound.

"It can't be, he has been hurt!" the lead orangutan exclaimed, heading with everyone to observe him, but still keeping an eye that Dixie did not escape. "Was it the tamers?!"

"The... same ones," the wounded mandrill replied, holding his own arm. "One of them shot him... and I shot him back, but then he shot me in the arm... and then I shot him again about three times. Don't you carry... that healing mixture now?!"

"We didn't bring any of those elixirs!" the lead orangutan replied. "We are vulnerable, we just carry those sapphires to create the healing mixture, but there is no time to do it right now!"

"We told you to just escape somewhere else aimlessly!" Jemky replied to them. "Why did these two monkeys matter now?!"

"It's true, how much whim did you have with these two?!" Rocky added. "I mean, we hate them too, but we weren't going to risk coming here for them either. We were just coming to take my father and our uncle Will."

"Urgh.... It's that..." the lead orangutan exclaimed, very furious. *"It's because of these two monkeys that everything happened! Anyway, the boss tamers will kill us lat-"*

"Wait, wait...!" the wounded red-lapel mandrill interrupted. "You know what?... I think this time the boys are right... Why do these two monkeys matter now? It's not worth it, the little monkey is already even moribund on that stretcher."

"You know?... I'm thinking the same thing now," the blue-lapel mandrill interrupted. "We didn't even come for these monkeys; we were just going to escape all together. We even thought that the monkeys were already dead."

"Why don't we... just finish *the bosses* off instead?" the red-lapel mandrill said, straining his voice.

"What?! We can't kill the bosses!" the lead orangutan replied, showing shock. "I mean--"

"It doesn't matter!" the mandrill interrupted. "Anyway, they'll kill us wherever we go! And just look at Melenky... He could die if we don't do something right now!... *Our bosses are monstrous after all!*"

Suddenly, the lead orangutan was silent for about five seconds while the other two mandrills and Jemky's quartet looked at him with absolute seriousness, even Melenky. Then, the hurt mandrill took the gun that Melenky was carrying, and as if things took a sudden turn, he threw it at Dixie.

"Take this, girl!" the mandrill told Dixie, earning a look of great strangeness from her. "Help us if you want!"

Dixie was shocked by the apes' attitude, which also made her doubt whether what they were telling her was true, so she just stared at the gun on the floor.

"Come on, take it! Let's finish those--"

"Over here! I heard their squeals!" a nearby voice was heard.

Suddenly, accelerated footsteps were heard closer and closer, accompanied by voices that clearly belonged to the tamers.

"Quick, it's now or never!" the mandrill exclaimed again, preparing the gun along with the rest. "And hide Melenky! Don't neglect--"

Suddenly, that red-lapel mandrill had received another sudden shot that knocked him to the floor. Instantly, the apes rushed to open fire and try to shoot at two of the tamers. But Dixie didn't stay to look at the scene anymore and, before that shooting began, she had already escaped from there along with Diddy's stretcher... and she had carried the weapon given to her by the apes. She would have stayed to fight the tamers, even the apes if necessary, but she couldn't put Diddy at risk at that point.

Meanwhile, the apes had stayed to try to confront the two remaining tamers, but they were rushing to fire first, so they must all be hiding behind the corners of the corridors. For his part, the mandrill that had been wounded was taken to hide in a nearby corner with Melenky in his arms... Both were already without any mobility.

Dixie, on the other hand, was trying to get to the area where there were recovery rooms so she could hide Diddy, but unfortunately, the tamer of the prosthetic leg appeared around a corner and aimed at her. Dixie hurriedly activated the gun she was carrying and fired a shot at the man, but he

had already hidden before and ran away when he saw Dixie armed. Dixie, now confidently, hurried to follow the tamer's pace and fired shots where he had gone, but she had already lost sight of him.

Afterwards, Dixie returned to take Diddy's stretcher again, but by bad luck, the one-eyed tamer had appeared. Instantly, she pushed the stretcher, rolling it to hide it, and then rushed to try to shoot the tamer, but he had tried to shoot first, so Dixie had to dodge. Then, the tamer fled, and Dixie tried to catch up, but had to abandon the chase at that moment since she couldn't leave Diddy alone.

Dixie returned a second time to pick Diddy's stretcher, but when she arrived... it was no longer in that corner. She panicked, as she was sure that the stretcher was at that point before. When suddenly, she heard gunshots that could not be heard so far away, which further increased the tension. Dixie began searching for Diddy in extreme desperation; she didn't want to think that the situation had become much worse. When suddenly, at the end of a corridor... she caught sight of Jemky and Mandrew shooting in one direction, until in a moment... both appeared to have been hit. Dixie, swallowing her fear, held her gun and ran in the direction of the scene.

"I ran out of projectiles!" Mandrew exclaimed, trying to shoot with his gun and, at the same time, holding his own arm in a forced way.

"Me too, darn it!" Jemky added, holding his own leg in the same way. "Attack him anyway!"

Upon arriving, Dixie noticed that Jemky and Mandrew, who were seen limb injuries, were fighting the prosthetic leg tamer, even if they struggled to move. The two of them, although the tamer had executed a couple more failed shots, pounced on him and began to attack him like wild animals. But before long, the tamer managed to push them away until they were knocked to the floor, and hurried to shoot mercilessly at both kong children. Second later, the blue-lapel mandrill appeared, who forcefully grabbed the tamer's false leg until he took it off, and began to attack him with it.

"You won't hurt our kids!" the mandrill exclaimed as he attacked the tamer, both with his leg and with his own claws in a savage and brutal way, so much so that the tamer could no longer defend himself and even got almost motionless.

For their part, Jemky and Mandrew had fallen near where Dixie was, whom they gave a faint look with narrowed eyes and heavy breathing.

"Your monkey... is over there," Jemky told her in a forced voice and pointing to the end of a corridor, while clutching his extremely sore abdomen.

"We pushed him toward there because... those tamers... were about to shoot him," Mandrew added in the same way.

Suddenly... Jemky and Mandrew closed their eyes and stood motionless on the floor. Dixie stared at them for a couple of seconds with a shocked look, and then hurried in the direction where she had been pointed. To her surprise, Diddy was in that corner "safe and sound." Then, without further thought, she continued to run through the corridors, trying to protect him and keep him sheltered.

On the other hand, the one-eyed tamer was still unharmed and with the gun in hand; although his was tranquilizer darts, he also carried another fire one. Suddenly, he spotted Rocky and the lead orangutan in different directions and began to fire shots at them, but not before they also tried to return them.

"Only one of them remains!" the blue-lapel mandrill exclaimed, appearing in front of the lead orangutan. "I already gave his big comeuppance to the second one! *That darned man shot Jemky and Mandrew!*"

"*What?!*" the orangutan exclaimed too furiously. "*Those darned scoundrels!*"

"Where's Rocky, by the way?! We must be careful, only he remains!"

"He went over there! Let's go! Let's not let them hurt him too... And I already ran out of projectiles, by the way!"

"And me too!"

Meanwhile, Dixie was hidden along with Diddy by a few corridors. She no longer wanted to fight in the confrontation; she felt quite exhausted and with a high uncertainty of not knowing what actions to take. Suddenly, she felt the presence of someone coming running through the next corridor. Without even peeking out to see who it was, Dixie ran away through the corridor again. Unfortunately, the one-eyed tamer appeared around a corner and began to chase her. Dixie hurriedly prepared her gun and tried to shoot him, but as if he didn't care at all, the tamer had rushed before to pounce on her and try to snatch it from her.

"*Let go of me, you darned!*" Dixie exclaimed, which was heard like high-pitched squeals for the tamer's hearing.

The tamer exerted enough force against Dixie until he lifted her into the air. In the middle of the struggle, the tamer even kicked Diddy's stretcher hard, sending it rolling at speed to the end of the corridor.

"*Nooo!*" Dixie exclaimed in extreme desperation, waving her feet in the air.

Suddenly, Dixie gathered strength and used her hair to try to choke the tamer, getting him to stop exerting force. But within seconds, the tamer managed to pull the end of her hair, which made Dixie lose strength. Then, with a quick movement, the tamer gave Dixie a hard push, throwing her away from him and reaching to take her gun to keep it in his pockets.

Dixie fell sharply to the floor, a few meters from the tamer and without having a weapon to defend herself. Then, the tamer reloaded the gun and aimed at Dixie, when suddenly... he was interrupted by someone who surprised him and began to attack him with slaps and scratches. It was the blue-lapel mandrill, who was trying to snatch some of his weapons. But a few seconds later, the tamer gave him a hard beat that sent him to the floor as well. Instantly, and since he had his gun loaded... he shot mercilessly at the mandrill. Then, he fired again in Dixie's direction, but she had already managed to hide.

A couple of seconds later, Dixie no longer heard any trace of the tamer, so she got back out where she was before. She was going to take her gun again, but it was no longer there. With no more to do, Dixie ran in the direction of where the tamer had sent Diddy's stretcher to roll, which had gone too far... even almost to the point of reaching the stairs.

For his part, the one-eyed tamer appeared to be heading towards Diddy's stretcher and was preparing his tranquilizer dart weapon to shoot him. But suddenly, the lead orangutan appeared along with Rocky, who pounced from side to side against the tamer and began to attack him like wild animals. But before long, the tamer kicked Rocky and rushed to shoot him instantly. The lead

orangutan emitted a loud shriek of anger and scratched the tamer's face, before the tamer kicked him back and shot him to the floor. Even though they were tranquilizer darts this time, both Rocky and the lead orangutan... got completely motionless.

Immediately, the tamer reloaded his dart gun and aimed it in Diddy's direction... but not before Dixie, who was less than a meter behind, propelled herself with the help of her hair, managed to take her gun back from the tamer's pocket and landed on Diddy's stretcher to shield him. Instantly, *she shot* the tamer head-on without thinking further... but unfortunately, the tamer had already released a couple of shots of tranquilizer darts, which fell directly to Dixie's arm and abdomen, knocking her down instantly. The tamer, who had also been wounded, fell backwards, near the stairs and clutching his chest wound.

On her part, Dixie felt that she was losing mobility while her vision began to distort. She hurriedly pulled back the darts as best she could from her, which caused her more pain. A second later, as if she got out of context for a while... Dixie began to have memories about Diddy, DK Island and her family. In the midst of her vision now blurred and with a heavy breathing, she caught sight of the tamer standing up again, so she hurried to take the gun and fired it at the tamer... But it didn't shoot anymore.

The tamer, even if he was wounded, stood again and began to load his dart gun one more time. Dixie, who was suddenly remembering that tragic episode of her parents with the tamers, tried to gather strength she still had left and began to stand up again, keeping her gaze fixed on the tamer. Before the tamer could release another shot, Dixie had managed to jump to pounce on him and began attacking him with all the fury she could feel at that moment with all her might. Her last attacks were with her hair, with which she managed to push the tamer to the edge of the stairs and, after a strong spinning kick that she gave him, the tamer lost his balance and *fell downhill* towards the stairs... not before he also managed to execute *another* couple of shots towards Dixie.

Dixie fell back near Diddy's stretcher... while she reached to hear *repeated and severe blows through the stairs*, which came from the tamer falling and hitting himself sharply as he got down.

Almost a minute passed while Dixie had a breathing and palpitations faster than ever, while her vision had become completely blurred. She felt that her strength was no longer enough at all, not even to withdraw the last darts she had received... Then, stranded on the floor, her mind replayed distant memories, this time being memories that belonged to the times when she lived in the circus or when she lived on her island with her entire family. Suddenly, several memories with her parents were the last thing her mind transmitted to her... before closing her eyes...

Chapter 79: Incident

"Quick! It's urgent to take them to the operating rooms! There's no time!" one of the doctors exclaimed as he ran down a corridor with other people carrying stretchers. Stretchers on which were some wounded primates; among them, four kong children of different species.

"Holy heavens! How could such a thing have happened?!" another person in another nearby corridor exclaimed. "Now it turns out that some apes were armed?!"

"It's impossible that it happened just like that; someone must have been responsible for this!"

"In fact... those three men who were also injured have been identified: they were the *Owens brothers*, the managing tamers of the now closed 'Zoovlaki' circus, the same ones who were fugitives after being sent to preventive prison for the massive animal escape that occurred about three months ago."

"What are you saying?! Are those three gentlemen?!... Doesn't this have to do with the aircraft incident?!"

"Many suggest that yes, but official proof hasn't been presented yet. How do they explain that other mandrills and orangutans have come here and, above all, how do they explain that *the chimpanzee* with the spider monkey we had under care were also at the scene of the massacre? By the way... now she seems to be injured too."

In the middle of those corridors, there were several groups of people crowded, even outside that building, where there were several curious people murmuring and asking each other about the situation. Everyone was shocked, because an event like the one that had just happened was not something that was seen every day.

On the outside, there were also several cars with red and blue lights that had been boarded by uniformed people with weapons on the sides, who entered the building along with other formal-looking people. Those people were inspecting the site and, above all, the areas where some apes had previously been confronting a group of tamers.

All the apes, both large and small, were being examined and even admitted to various wards by doctors. Meanwhile, the group of tamers had been moved out of that place.

Among all those injured apes was Diddy, who had already been hurt before, but now had to be put under care again. And on the other hand, there was Dixie, who despite not having received extremely serious attacks... had been heavily affected by the quantity of darts she received at the end of the confrontation.

Chapter 80: Three Days Later

About three days later, several things had happened. Now, inside a room with some small stretchers, were lying on them some little kongs, all of different species. Those kong children seemed to be at rest after the tragic event there.

Suddenly, one of these children, who was an orangutan, began to open his eyes slowly as he seemed to try to regain track of time. Later, he tried to get up, still with a lost look and rubbing his temple... but then clutching his abdominal area, where apparently, he felt a stabbing and unbearable pain that made him emit a slight squeal. When he observed himself, he noticed that he had a kind of white sticker attached, which he began to remove.

"Hey, don't take that off!" another of the children, who was a capuchin monkey on the stretcher next to him, suddenly exclaimed. "And how good that you already woke up."

"What?" Jemky said, looking at him strangely as he put the 'sticker' back in place, but not before he had seen what he had under it. "W-what is this?! Why..." he added before giving out a squeal of pain after trying to stand up.

"Calm down, don't move so abruptly or it will hurt," Rocky replied. "It's that you have a wound. We confronted those tamers while trying to escape with our dads, don't you remember? If I'm not mistaken, one of them shot you. And according to what I've heard from some people in white coats who are around here: they took out the projectiles in you and then they stitched up your wounds, and that's why you should rest like everyone here."

Jemky gave him another look of weirdness for a few seconds. Then, he turned to observe the rest of the room, where on other nearby stretchers, Mandrew, Melenky and also Diddy were still asleep.

"They're still asleep," Rocky said. "But according to those people, they'll soon wake up."

"And you weren't asleep too?" Jemky asked.

"Yes, but I think only for a few hours after that massacre. That tamer who had an eye patch just shot those sleeping syringes at me. The rest of you were hit with gun projectiles."

"And where are our dads?"

"They are resting in another room here; they still have to recover. In fact, your father is also already awake and must only recover from a few blows like me; he was only shot with sleeping syringes too. My father has also already woken up. The others are still asleep... Well, that's all I've heard so far."

"Oh, but how long should we rest- *Ahhh!*" Jemky gave a squeal and clutched his abdomen after trying to jump off the stretcher. "Heck, this hurts like a cauldron! Not even when Dixie shot me or someone gave me a good beating... Hey, and by the way... if the monkey is also here, where is Dixie?" he added, pointing to Diddy and noticing Dixie's absence.

"Uh, well... From what I heard: she has been *very affected*. I think they're still doing some kind of healing for her, that's why they haven't brought her here yet. She received only those syringes too, but... I think they were quite a few."

"Ah, so she's still healing," Jemky said as he carefully got off his stretcher, then began climbing onto the Mandrew's. "Uhh, hey, Mandrew... are you awake?" he added, shaking his shoulders.

"Hey, don't move him!" Rocky replied. "The white-robed people said that they must not be moved like this, or they will have complications."

"And then how much longer will they be?"

"W-what?" a different voice was heard, which belonged to Mandrew.

Suddenly, Mandrew began to open his eyes too, although with more weakness and emitting slight squeals of pain as he tried to get up.

"He's alive!" Jemky exclaimed, showing excitement and pointing to Mandrew.

"Don't move too much, Mandrew," Rocky said, heading to him and trying to calm him down. "You don't have to get up if you can't. They took out the projectile that those tamers fired at you, that's all. Now you have to rest."

"What the...?" Mandrew said in a weak voice. "And for how... long?"

"I don't know yet," Rocky replied. "Anyway, I was just waiting for all our dads to wake up so they let us create that blue healing elixir and get out of here quick."

Suddenly, the door of that room began to open, while a group of three of those doctors were entering, which earned some looks of weirdness from Jemky and Mandrew; the latter was still lying down.

"And who are they?" Jemky whispered, looking sideways at them as they approached.

"They're those people I mentioned to you," Rocky replied. "They're a kind of doctors, I guess."

The people stopped to examine Jemky and Mandrew especially, making observations on their wounds... which made these two put on faces of distrust and began to put up resistance.

"Don't be afraid, they don't hurt," Rocky told them.

"Don't worry, little one, it's for your good," one of the people told Jemky with a sweet tone, trying to examine his wound.

Jemky began to be uncomfortable at the intervention of those people towards him. He even looked somewhat fearful and, as a defense, tried to push people away, but his pains in the wound prevented him from doing so and made him emit squeals of pain. Mandrew, on the other hand, was in the same way, although he could not move so much and was still lying down.

"No, no, don't move, please," one of the people said, while they were putting a liquid on their wounds, which caused a certain burning in them. "Okay, okay, it will only hurt a little, but it will help you heal," they added, trying to calm them down.

Then, the people finished examining them and began to write on some paper sheets that they carried, before also going to examine Melenky and Diddy, who were still asleep. Meanwhile, Jemky and Mandrew kept breathing agitated by the intervention they had received.

"It seems that these little ones are recovering well," one of the people said. "Even the spider monkey has been recovering after he had to be operated again. And we're just waiting for the little red-shanked langur to wake up. The one that is already quite recovered is the capuchin monkey. The other adult mandrills and orangutans have shown improvements as well, but at a slower pace; they still need stricter care and examinations to be done."

"Geez, how could an event like that have happened?" another person said. "On top of that, *inside this clinic...* And by the way, how is the little chimpanzee?"

Suddenly, the other two people looked away while showing themselves... as if they did not want to answer at first.

"Well... I'd like to say that she is also recovering," one of the people replied, before emitting a sigh. "But... I'd be lying to you if I told you that. She's not well at all, really. She has already had some interventions, but it seems that her body is not resisting the high amount of tranquilizer she received. She only opened her eyes the day after the event, but she looked very bad so she was taken to the intensive care unit."

"It can't be!" another of the people exclaimed, showing shock. "But... That is, *will she still* be undergoing treatment? Or will she..."

"No, I don't know if you understand what I mean... She hasn't shown *any* improvement, and if she no longer does... it's very likely that she won't be here tomorrow anymore."

"Oh, no, what a pity for her," another of the people said, looking very saddened. "And she used to be fine, that is, she had only arrived here with light bruises but nothing more; she was the only one who arrived stable here."

"Yeah, I feel very sorry. Maybe she tried to protect the spider monkey; she was found lying near his stretcher, and one of those men who were from the circus was at the foot of the stairs with a tranquilizer dart weapon. News have not yet given official statements about the event, but the three former tamers are hospitalized too... And according to reports, they've had serious, *very serious* injuries."

"What a thing. But it's very clear that those three former tamers have a lot to do with this, even if some say they still have to gather enough evidence to charge them for that massacre."

"What happened to the other four little chimpanzees that came in the aircraft, by the way?"

"They still don't appear; they have not even come to eat. It's likely that they have been lost without a trace."

The people began to leave as they continued to talk. Meanwhile, the kids from Jemky's quartet, except for Melenky who was still sleeping, remained silent for a long time, at the same time looking at each other with uncertainty.

Suddenly, on the other side was Diddy... who seemed to have moved his eyelids, while his breathing began to accelerate as usual.

"What did those people just say?" Jemky asked, still in surprise. "That is... we're all fine, but did they mean that Dixie..."

"It was the same thing I understood," Rocky added, shrugging his shoulders and looking uncertain.

"By the way, I'm really hungry," Mandrew said, keeping himself lying down. "No food around here?"

"Maybe they'll bring it to us later," Rocky replied, before looking and pointing in one direction. "Hey, look..."

Suddenly, they could see that Diddy was beginning to present movement on his own. Seconds later, he began to open his eyes in a forced way, while feeling as if he had a huge weight on his head. Then he slammed his eyes open and fully recovered his sense of reality; he felt a sudden fright upon looking up at the white ceiling above him.

"The monkey has woken up," Jemky whispered.

Diddy opened his eyes again to the fullest when he heard those murmurs that belonged to Jemky's quartet. He turned his head and made a shocked expression upon seeing them on stretchers too.

"W-what?!" Diddy exclaimed, getting up in one fell swoop... before emitting a sore squeal and clutching his abdomen upon a sudden excruciating pain he felt in it.

"Don't move so much like that, monkey," Jemky said. "Or it'll hurt you like you couldn't imagine."

"But what?!" Diddy exclaimed, looking at his wound, which was covered in a white 'sticker'. Then, he looked at the quartet again; he had no idea what had happened or what time or what day it was. And, as if that were not enough, he did not know at all where he was and why Jemky's quartet was also there. "What is all thi-

"You're injured too, monkey," Jemky interrupted. "If I'm not mistaken, you may have been shot in that plane which you were taken to."

"Uh, yeah, but... what happened now?" Diddy asked again, watching everywhere uncertainly. "W-what place is this?! And why are you also here in these beds?!"

"Because we were hurt too. Look," Jemky replied, showing him his wound.

"This is like a hospital," Rocky added. "There are people out there who look like doctors."

Diddy looked at them with extreme weirdness; he was beginning to think that the four of them were playing a bad joke on him, even if he saw Melenky asleep and Mandrew unable to get up. After a while of silence, he gave them a look reluctantly.

"You guys are plotting something!" Diddy said, raising his voice. "What are you up to right n-" he added before clutching his wound after trying to stand up. "Tell me!"

"Hey, we're not plotting anything!" Rocky replied with an indignant expression. "We are here because our wounds are healing. And in case you haven't heard, you were here before we arrived, Dixie was here with you and my father and our uncle Will were healing his wounds in this place too. You remember being taken in a plane that crashed, right?"

"Yes, of course," Diddy replied, still confused and trying to remember. "But how did it crash?... In fact, I think it was *your father* who shot me and I fell down. Then, Dixie stayed to help me and then I don't know what happened... By the way, and where is Dixie?!"

"*W-wait*, let me continue explaining," Rocky interrupted quickly and with a forced smile. "Well, I guess that plane crashed and both of you were brought here with my father and Uncle Will. And when we got here-"

"Hey, sorry to interrupt," Diddy said, staring at them, before pausing. "Where is... Dixie?"

Rocky and Jemky, even Mandrew, looked at each other... as if they didn't know what to tell him.

"Uhh, I-look, Diddy..." Jemky said with a forced smile as well. "You see, in short: we came here with our dads to rescue Rocky's father and our uncle, the other orangutan, and then... *those tamers came too*, and we began to fight with them. And so-"

"I asked *where Dixie is*," Diddy interrupted, beginning to have a bad feeling for them. "What did you do with her?!"

"Hey, hey, calm down," Rocky replied. "You see, there was a massacre three days ago in this place. Those tamers wanted to kill us all and then-"

"Speak to me with the truth!" Diddy ordered them starting to get up, holding his wound at the same time.

"Well, that, monkey!" Jemky replied. "We had a confrontation with those tamers."

"You have plotted something!" Diddy told them, trying to go against them and as if he was not convinced by that answer. "Tell me where Dixie is!"

"Well, she participated in that massacre too!" Rocky replied, raising his voice. "In fact, she was protecting you during the event and-"

"But I want to know where she is right n-" interrupted Diddy before complaining of pain in his wound after making a sharp movement.

"Look, Diddy, first of all..." Jemky said, stepping down from his stretcher to take Diddy to his by his arm, "you'd better go back to your bed and not move as much or that wound will hurt like hell, believe me."

"But first I want to know where Dixie is!" Diddy replied, reaching his stretcher again, though with difficulty climbing up. "Tell me where she is!... Or did you or your dads or those tamers do something to her?!"

Suddenly, there was a moment of silence as Jemky climbed back onto his stretcher and they looked at each other with expressions of not wanting to answer.

"*Tell me!*" Diddy replied, staring at them.

"Uh, hey, little monkey... it's that..." Rocky said with a rather forced smile, before speaking to Jemky whispering to him. "*Who tells him?*"

"What thing?!" Diddy replied, beginning to be furious. "Tell me!"

The kids from the quartet continued to look at each other with faces of uncertainty as they gestured with their eyes to each other to answer with the truth to Diddy.

"Uh, well... You see, Diddy..." Rocky said with a tone of insecurity. "What happens is that... Dixie *is also* in this place, but it's that... I mentioned that she was in the confrontation too, and well... Well, she is..."

"Wait a minute!" Diddy interrupted, looking shocked after starting to grasp what they wanted to tell him. "Are you... telling me that Dixie..."

"If she *is*..." Jemky continued with a forced smile. "Uh, no, no... it's not that; she is alive."

"Yes, that," Rocky added in the same way. "Uhh, well, she is *not yet*..."

"What do you mean with '*not yet*'?!" Diddy replied, beginning to feel an inner tension. "Tell me well how it is!"

"Oh, okay, I'll be direct!" Rocky exclaimed, returning to a normal tone, before sighing. "Look, do you remember I mentioned some people who are doctors in this place? Well... they were here recently and said that... Dixie... is in a *very bad state*, that is, she's the only one who has not recovered!... And if she doesn't recover until tomorrow..."

"Well... *you know*..." Jemky added, still uncertain, "she will fall asleep... *forever*."

"*What?!*" Diddy exclaimed, freezing for a few seconds, but then looked at them with a reluctant expression. "It has to be a joke! You want..."

"Seriously, it's true!" Rocky interrupted. "If you want the truth, that's the truth!"

"You lie! You want to take me for a fool as usual! *You are*..."

"We're telling you the truth, Diddy!" Jemky replied. "That's what those people said: Dixie won't be here anymore tomorrow! That's what they said!"

"*You're lying! You always come out with your bad jok-*"

"*It is true, Diddy!*" Rocky replied, raising his voice more. "What's more, if you want to know what happened, so: the last thing Dixie did was face that one-eyed tamer; it was even to protect you. She shot that man and threw him down the stairs, but that man also shot her with that sleeping syringes weapon and that was what hurt her a lot!... And I did see that, because that tamer also shot that tranquilizer at me shortly before, but he shot it at Dixie many more times."

Diddy, while breathing heavily in both anger and worry, kept looking at them very reluctantly and as if he still thought it was all a bad joke... or at least that's what he wanted to think.

"*You won't take me for a fool again, you stupids,*" Diddy replied angrily, before getting back off the stretcher. "You know what?! I'm going to go find Dixie right now! *Whatever this place is!*"

"*Hey, what are you doing?!*" Jemky exclaimed. "You can't get out of here!"

"*Yes, I will! I know Dixie is somewhere and she's fine!*"

Diddy, as if he felt no pain in his wound now, began to sped towards the door with all attitude. Instantly, Rocky and Jemky got down and went after him to stop him.

"Hey, come here, monkey!" Rocky said, taking his arm. "You can't get out; you'll be caught by those people!"

"I don't care! I'll go find Dixie!" Diddy replied, pushing them away.

"Your wound is going to open, monkey!" Jemky added in the same way. "*Don't get agitated like th-*"

Suddenly, Diddy gave them a push that got them both away in one fell swoop, without feeling pain in his wound due to despair. Immediately, he opened the door and walked out at a fast pace as if nothing.

"We better not have told him," Jemky said, shrugging and clutching his wound.

On his part, Diddy was already walking and even almost *running* through the corridors. He had no idea where he was going or what that place was, but he needed to know an answer on his own; this time, he didn't want to trust anything until he saw with his own eyes. Even if those answers that Rocky and Jemky gave him about Dixie resonated in his mind, he wanted to keep sticking with the idea that they wanted to play a bad joke on him like they had before.

"A monkey!" a voice behind him suddenly said.

Diddy turned to look and saw a pair of people in white suits staring at him in amazement. Diddy ignored it and started running at speed, still not feeling any pain in his wound.

"But what?! It's the spider monkey!" one of the people exclaimed, pointing at him.

"He's already awake! Don't let him escape, he can't run like that!"

Diddy had no idea how they had references about him, so he hurried to detour through other corridors aimlessly, until he lost sight of those people. He hid in a corner to take a short break while his breathing was agitated and later his wound began to hurt. Even so, he did not want to give up and resumed the search for Dixie; all he wanted was to know something about her.

Later, while Diddy continued to search through various corners of the corridors and even the windows that were there... he noticed that behind one of the latter, there was a *silhouette* quite known to him. He tried to climb up until he could see better through that window, and what he could see caught his attention instantly: there was a stretcher with certain devices on the sides, and where on it... there was a little chimpanzee apparently sleeping. Before thinking of the worst, Diddy hurried to get down and headed towards the door of that room so he could enter. As he did so, he felt as if his breathing and heartbeat stopped for a few milliseconds... That chimpanzee had blond hair and light brown fur, *just like Dixie was*.

After a few seconds of gaping and freezing, Diddy began to accelerate his pace and climbed up to that stretcher. Suddenly, he felt a sudden scramble in his chest and as if the circulation went to his feet suddenly, seeing that it was *Dixie who was there*.

"D-Dixie...?" Diddy pronounced, still clinging to the idea that she would only be sleeping.

Then, Diddy grabbed Dixie's arm and began to shake her, as despair gripped him as he realized that Dixie didn't really move at all. Now he was having the reaction he would have had when Jemky and Rocky had told him what had happened, if not for the fact that he had thought it was a joke.

"Dixie!" Diddy exclaimed, panicking and moving Dixie to try to wake her up. "Dixie... Are you... o-okay?!... Dixie?"

Diddy stood with a blank expression as he tried to process the situation. He still didn't want to accept that the worst could happen and he wanted to hold on to the idea that it would be just a joke, but he couldn't anymore... not if he was now seeing with his own eyes that Dixie was all motionless and with some devices attached to her, just as he was a few days ago.

"Oh, no... Dixie?... Dixie!" Diddy exclaimed again, trying to reanimate her without success. Suddenly, he felt his eyes begin to moisten as he didn't know exactly what was happening to her. "Dixie, please... Please, wake up... Look at me, Dixie..." he added in a trembling voice. "It's me, Dixie... Diddy."

Diddy continued to keep an agitated breathing and with continuous squeezes in his chest when he saw that Dixie did not react.

"Dix...?" Diddy said, starting to have cloudy vision as his eyes became wetter and wetter.

Suddenly, footsteps were heard through the door. Diddy turned to look at what it was and noticed the presence of a couple of medical people, who were entering the room.

"Holy heavens! What are you doing here, little monkey?" the person exclaimed, heading towards him. "You can't be here-"

Suddenly, Diddy began to resist them as they tried to take him in their arms; he knew nothing at all about what they were doing, so he gave a frightened primate squeal.

"No, no, don't worry, little one," one of the people said in a sweet tone. "We won't hurt you; we have spent taking care of you these days."

Suddenly, the people tried to carry him out of the room, but soon after, Diddy resisted again and tried to untie himself from those people, while stretching his arms in Dixie's direction.

"Hey, calm down, little monkey!" the person carrying him exclaimed, trying to calm him down, before noticing Diddy pointing insistently in Dixie's direction. "Oh, no, don't worry... S-she is sleeping; she has to rest. You can't enter here, and you must rest too; you're still with the wound."

"You must stay where you were, little monkey," another of the people said as if talking to a little child.

The people got Diddy out of that room and took him back in the direction of the recovery room where he had been before. Diddy, on the other hand, was still desperate and distraught after knowing about Dixie, and was still thinking about how to see her again.

A few minutes later, the people returned to the room along with Diddy and put him back on his stretcher. Diddy was going to get down instantly to escape, but the people stopped him.

"No, you can't get agitated, little one," one of the people said. "It's going to hurt you."

"It's time to examine him to check his state," another of the people said.

Suddenly, Diddy had gone blank as he tried to process what was happening. He wanted to think that maybe it was just a nightmare that his mind would be playing on him, as he never imagined a

place like that, much less in that situation. The last thing he remembered was that he had been with Dixie in that aircraft fighting two of the apes, and where at one point, one of the mandrills had shot him after he had defended Dixie. And in his last memories, he only had the image of Dixie trying to help him and caressing her face before he had lost all sense of reality...

While Diddy was still immersed in thought, the medical people were examining him and even treating his wound with a liquid. Diddy felt so empty that he couldn't even feel so much physical pain while being examined. On the other hand, the kids from Jemky's quartet stared at him while looking at each other uncertainly.

"It seems that everything is fine with the little monkey," one of the people commented. "Of course, he has to continue in recovery."

"Although... he looks somewhat lost, really," another of the people said, looking at his face. "Look at his eyes."

"It must be the unknown of not knowing where he is... Don't worry, little one, you're safe now," one of the people said, caressing his head while Diddy kept an empty look... Suddenly, the person began to look sad and heaved a sigh. "Oh, the little chimpanzee would be so happy to see that her little friend has woken up... but..."

"I know, it's a pity," another of the people added in the same tone. "It really makes me very sad; she won't be able to see him anymore... And is there really nothing that can be done?"

"The tranquilizer has spread so much inside her; the only thing left is just to wait... maybe until today or tomorrow, when her heartbeat no longer responds."

Diddy regained his senses after hearing those words from those people, while feeling a sudden and continuous blow inside, while his breathing began to accelerate.

Then, the people finished examining Diddy, and even put back his usual clothes: his cap and his shirt, also taking care that his wound was not affected.

"That's it. Now you must stay to rest, little one," one of the people said, giving him small and sweet pats on the head, while Diddy looked at them uncertainly. "And you can't get out, or it can hurt your wound, okay?"

Later, the people left the room, leaving the little kongs alone again.

Diddy had an empty but anguished look at the same time. Even if he already felt some pain in his wound, he also began to feel an inner pain while he could only think... about *Dixie*. Suddenly, his eyes began to fill with tears, which rolled down his face later.

"Hey..." someone next to him said, who was Rocky along with Jemky who had climbed onto his stretcher to see him. "We told you it was true," he added with a tone of seriousness.

Diddy looked up at them in all seriousness, trying to hold back his tears; the last thing he wanted was for that statement of theirs to have been true.

"I'm so sorry, monkey..." Jemky said earnestly. "But we weren't joking this time."

Suddenly, Diddy began to breathe heavily, while showing a distressed expression again, before exploding.

"No, it's not true!" Diddy exclaimed as his eyes began to shed a couple of tears. "This still has to be a joke! Dixie will be fine!"

"But it's not a joke," Rocky replied. "I mean... you just heard from those very same people that Dixie won't-"

"No!" Diddy interrupted, raising his voice and getting back down from his stretcher abruptly. "Dixie will be fine! I'll go see her; I know she'll be fine!"

"Hey, what are you doing?!" Rocky replied, heading to stop him. "You can't get out of here, even those doctors told you!"

"No, leave me!" Diddy replied, pushing them away.

"Don't be stubborn, monkey!" Jemky told him. "Your wound can be reopened!"

Diddy pushed them away again, ignoring the pain of his own wound. Immediately, he walked out of the room again and started running in the direction of where he had seen Dixie before. This time, he was careful that no one from that place would see him.

A couple of minutes later, Diddy had arrived back at the room where Dixie was. Even if he had already heard with his own ears what had happened, he wanted to get the idea that all was not lost and that at some point he would see Dixie again. He got stealthy into the room and headed back to Dixie's stretcher to climb up and try to do something about it.

"Dixie..." he said, taking her arm and with a look of pleading. "Please... tell me you will be fine... Dixie!"

Diddy began shaking her arm again and even trying to open her eyes, just as she had done to him previously. He tried in various ways to try to get Dixie to respond... but it did not seem to be possible at all; Dixie was completely motionless.

"Dixie!... P-please, wake up," he said as tears rolled down his face. "Please, Dixie... speak to me!"

But with every second he spent trying to reanimate her, he felt anguish take over him. Suddenly, Diddy inevitably began to emit light sobs.

"Dix... please... just tell me it's not true..." he said, before letting his tears begin to flow continuously. "Tell me it's not true you're leaving, Dixie... Please, don't it... Don't do this..."

Diddy just let his tears fall even on her, while his sobs had become more repetitive.

"Dix... w-we have to go back to DK Island... You said we would get it... Tiny needs you! Kiddy and Chunky need you!... They all need us there, Dix... I need you... Please, just look at me, Dixie..."

Diddy took Dixie's hand and held it for a moment, while continuing to shed continuous tears. He started thinking about the whole situation they had been through. He didn't know how they got there; it was assumed that in the past week they barely expected to be able to return to DK Island with calm. He was also thinking about those words the people had said recently: how Dixie would

be happy to see him again. He knew that Dixie was still present, but he didn't want to imagine hearing later from those people that she wouldn't be anymore; his world would have collapsed, much more than it already was.

"Dixie..." he said in tears. "Please, just tell me something... Don't go... Dixie..."

Diddy continued to shed living tears and sobbing continuously. Later, after wiping away his tears at every moment, he just lay next to Dixie and stayed by her side for a long time. He just wanted to stay by her side and look at her, even if he felt his world fall apart upon seeing her like that. Between moments, Diddy caressed her face, remembering that it was the last thing he did at the last moment he saw her in that aircraft...

Chapter 81: A Last Hope

Almost a couple of hours passed, while Diddy continued at Dixie's side. He didn't even want to take care of his own wound on his abdomen; he could only think of accompanying her. His crying stopped and returned several times, while staring at Dixie and caressing her hair or face. Suddenly... Diddy listened and saw that the door of that room had opened again. He barely looked up weakly without even taking into account that a couple of people had entered.

"Oh, no, the little monkey here again," one of the people said, astonished and heading towards Diddy. "No, no, little monkey, you can't stay here."

Suddenly, the person tried to take him in his arms, but Diddy refused to let go of Dixie; he wanted to hold on to her as much as he could.

"Come here, little monkey," the person said as he grabbed his torso, but Diddy still did not let go of Dixie. Until later, the other person pushed his arms away from Dixie. "You must go to rest, little one. Your little friend, uhh... Well, she has *to rest* too."

"Wow, it seems that they were both very good friends," the other person commented.

The people took Diddy back in their arms, while he didn't look away from Dixie until the last second with still watery eyes.

Later, the people left Diddy again on his stretcher, in the same room where Jemky's quartet was. But this time, none of the four were there, except for Melenky, who was still asleep.

The people then checked Diddy again and examined his wound. Meanwhile, he only showed a low and empty look, as if he was not in his five senses.

Minutes later, the people took Diddy back in their arms and carried him to another place, although this time he did not even want to put up resistance; it just seemed as if he didn't care about anything at that moment. After a tour, the people reached the ground floor of the building, and headed towards a site that was outdoors. Diddy looked up again when the place caught his eye... This one looked like the jungle itself, only it also had certain colorful objects similar to toys.

Suddenly, he could see Jemky, Rocky and now also Mandrew, in the company of some people who were placing some colorful boards that had rubber balls attached, all of different colors. The three kids looked strangely at those objects and then at the people, who were showing them how they worked.

"How have these little ones behaved?" one of the people asked, who carried Diddy in his arms and placed him next to the quartet.

"So far they have been calm," another of the people replied. "Well, maybe it's because they're just recovering. The little orangutan has shown certain rebellious attitudes when we have tried to interact with him. The mandrill has signs of aggressive behavior. The capuchin monkey shows a lot of distrust, but it seems that it's the one that best grasps the explanations."

"I saw that coming; we can see that these little ones have certain psychological deviations... First of all, they were also involved in the matter of the massacre; what kind of environment must they

have had in their lives?"

The kids from the quartet gave a few odd glances towards the people, but then downplayed it. Then, everyone looked at Diddy, whom the people had placed in a stall next to them and handed him one of those boards as well.

Later, the people retreated and left the kongs alone. The latter only looked strangely at the peculiar object that had been given to them.

"And what is this thing?" Mandrew asked with a look of disgust.

"It looks like a baby toy," Jemky said in the same way, before pressing one of the rubber balls that was there, which bounced instantly and made a sudden sound. "But what...?" he added before pressing more of those spheres consecutively, apparently causing him to smile. "Hey, this sounds good, give it a try."

"That's right..." Rocky said, who had also started playing with the object. "Wow, this feels... nice?"

"Let's see who can press the most ones in the shortest time!" Jemky exclaimed defiantly.

Jemky, Rocky and Mandrew started pressing several of those spheres at the same time, as if they were playing... In fact, they were seen with faces as if they found that activity entertaining... as if they were little children.

On the other hand, there was Diddy with one of those boards too, from which he barely pressed one of the colored spheres and then abandoned the interaction. He just kept sitting with a low look, as if there was nothing to cheer him up... Although to tell the truth, there was *nothing* that could cheer him up. His expression even looked quite similar to that of the kong children who had been hypnotized and kidnapped.

"Hey," Jemky, who was next to him, called him. Diddy barely wanted to look up. "Why don't you try this game? It's funny," he added, patting him on the back. "Come on, press them."

Jemky pressed the spheres of the board that Diddy had, as if trying to give him a pinch of joy... But Diddy remained quiet and stared down.

"Hey, don't be sad, monkey," Jemky said, shaking his shoulder. "You have to be strong."

"Yeah, cheer up," Rocky added. "Rejoice that we defeated those three crazy tamers... Well, our dads defeated them, and the last one was defeated by Dixie."

"And that's why Dixie is going to die, right?" Mandrew asked recklessly.

"Uhh... well, *no*," Rocky replied with a forced smile. "I mean... not exactly, she'll just fall *asleep* forever."

"And isn't it the same thing?" Mandrew asked.

"*No, Mandrew*," Rocky muttered, pointing at Diddy with his eyes.

Suddenly, there was a noise among the vegetation around them, as if someone was nearby.

"It's those doctors," Jemky said with a shrug.

Within seconds, those noises resonated again, capturing everyone's attention, including Diddy's. Suddenly, some slight movements were observed among the bushes that were nearby.

"Those doctors wouldn't be there, would they?" Mandrew said, looking sideways into the bushes.

Suddenly, about *four silhouettes* peeked through these bushes, causing everyone to look at each other shocked at the unexpected encounter.

"What?!" Jemky gasped open. "The Jennies?!"

Just as they said, they were seeing that quartet of *mechanical* kong children, who were somewhat frightened and looking strangely at them all. They looked pretty good and without any trace of having been hurt or mistreated.

"Oh, right," Rocky said pensively. "I think I've heard from those doctors about four other ape children who have escaped; they must be the-"

Suddenly, other movements were heard nearby, although this time, they did belong to the doctors who were heading to the site. The quartet of mechanical children immediately hid out of sight, giving no time for the others to catch them.

"Hey, look!" Jemky pointed to the doctors.

Five of these doctors had arrived, one of whom was carrying no one else and none other than *Melenky*, who looked quite awake and, as expected, with bandages on his wounds.

"It's Melenky! It's Melenky!" Rocky exclaimed, jumping with excitement.

"We have a surprise for you, little ones," the people said, showing Melenky on the ground. "Your other little friend has woken up, and he's doing great."

The others in the quartet were excited and even tried to give Melenky a sudden hug, but not before people got in the way.

"Hey, calm down, calm down, you know you can't move like that," the person said with a little laugh.

"Melenky is alive!" Jemky exclaimed. "Now we're complete!"

"We don't need the sapphire healer to wake him up anymore!" Rocky added. "Now we'll only have to heal."

The four kids were smiling and even wanting to jump with excitement if not for the wounds they had.

But that event... just made Diddy feel worse, it wasn't because of Melenky... but by Dixie; he wished with all his being that she would also appear in that way. He, although it was not possible at the time, begged that Dixie would be awake and he would be able to see her again. That thought only made a couple of tears fall from him, wiping them silently in a disguised way, even if he needed to collapse into tears again.

A couple of minutes later, the people took every kong in their arms and re-entered the recovery room. They made brief examinations on them to check their condition, and then withdrew. The

quartet emitted expressions of excitement when they saw themselves together again, holding their own wounds between moments because they tried to make celebratory jumps. Diddy, on the other hand, just lay on his stretcher, still with a dull look and with his thoughts all empty...

Later, the medical people returned with small trays, on which they brought some pieces of fruit. Immediately, they began to distribute it to each of the kong children, who did not hesitate at all to take them, since they looked quite hungry... Except for Diddy, who even though he had not tasted food for too long, did not even want to take the tray; the people had to leave it for him to take it himself. Diddy kept a dull expression, which even the doctors noticed.

Those people, while seeing Diddy, only tried to cheer him up by lightly patting him on the head or making a gesture of affection. They didn't seem to want to talk to him so much about what was going on with Dixie.

"Oh, the little monkey looks very bad," one of the doctors commented after it was in vain to cheer him up. "I think he isn't even in the mood to eat."

"He must be too sad, and I know... It must be because of his little friend, the chimpanzee," another person added, before caressing his head compassionately. "There, there, little one."

Even so, Diddy was still downcast and barely looking at people. He didn't even know how to feel now, while he could only think of Dixie.

"And by the way, how have all these little ones been?" another person asked. "I mean, have all the physical exams been done to check their health status?"

"Well, yes, their results are already coming out," another of the people replied, nodding, and then gave a sigh as if with some concern. "And truth be told... you wouldn't want to know all the *dreadful* things that were found in them... Specifically in the four little ones here," they added, pointing to Jemky and company, earning a look of surprise from them.

"Really? What have their exams said?... Is there anything to worry about in them?"

"You see, first of all... it may not have to do with the massacre, but certain traces of *toxicity* were found in their blood, I mean... it's as if they've been consuming some kind of... harmful substances or some insect venom."

"What are you saying?!" another of the people exclaimed, showing somewhat alarmed. "What... But they're baby primates!"

"That's what was detected in them; it's in the results," the other person reaffirmed. "I don't know how they ended up getting that, which in fact, has been causing serious damage to their bodies, especially their brain and cardiovascular system, or they could also develop deadly diseases. In fact... the little orangutan and the mandrill have already been detected signs of currently developing them."

The kids from Jemky's quartet looked with extreme oddity at the people, while the four of them looked at each other with too much confusion.

"No, what a horror," one of the people exclaimed, showing concern, as they looked towards the four little kongs. "But what could have happened to them?... And they can still be treated, right?"

"That also remains to be seen, because it's not just that," the same person continued. "These little ones were also found to have internal injuries that... don't seem to have healed properly; it's as if someone only treated them superficially with some kind of *strange mineral*."

"What are you saying? How's that?"

"We detected traces of a blue mineral in them that seems to act as defenses, but superficially. For example... the little orangutan was found to have suffered a gunshot wound in the chest area not long ago, and no, it's not a gunshot from the recent massacre, but perhaps from months ago, and as you can see, there are no scars there, but... internally, there are signs that he had it."

"Is that serious? I mean... nothing can be seen with the naked eye on his chest."

"That's how it is: you can't see them with the naked eye. It's as if they had healed on the outside, but inside they were not fully healed. And that's not the most serious thing... In these little ones were also found old injuries and wounds inside that have not finished healing properly. Signs of injuries, wounds, dislocations, and even other old gunshots were detected inside them."

"What?! It can't be," the other people exclaimed with horrified expressions. "And why?"

"Well, it's as if these little ones have already had several accidents years ago, or something much more alarming... having suffered serious mistreatment and aggression. All four have internal damage, and that seems to be affecting them."

The kids from the quartet just looked at each other with oddity at the magnitude with which the people talked about them.

"Holy heavens, but in what environment could these creatures have lived? What situations could they have gone through?... Is it those very former tamers who have hurt them? Or those very mandrills and orangutans that came with them? Or some other primate?"

"We can't know that exactly; the little ones can't talk to us... But yes, and several *dreadful* signs were found in them; for example, in the little mandrill and langur were found other old signs of having been shot like the little orangutan. Some of them even have certain untreated dislocations, as if they had had severe blows, falls or as if someone else had hurt them, even the little langur and the orangutan have horrible injuries that really left us horrified. The little capuchin monkey has the fewest injuries, but anyway, he's not quite right either; he also has old wounds.

"What a horror, poor creatures," another of the people said as they looked at the group of little kongs. "How could they all have lived?... And are they all like that? What about the spider monkey and the chimpanzee?"

"Well, they have been healthier and nothing alarming was found in them like the other four little ones; only the recent wounds were detected, although well... you know how the little chimpanzee is now. And anyway, we must also take into account the state of the other four little ones, since they can develop serious long-term complications, or even... not reaching adulthood alive, because with all that was detected in them... their life expectancy doesn't seem to be more than three or four years longer."

"Oh, no, that would be terrible for them... And are the exams already all written down?"

"Yes, if you want, come so you can see and believe everything they informed us," he said to the other people as they left the room. "By the way, don't forget to make sure that the little spider monkey has eaten; he can't stay that way either," he added, pointing to Diddy.

Then, the people retreated and left them alone. Jemky's quartet only remained silent for a while as they looked at each other strangely after hearing those people talking that way about them.

"And what are those people talking about?" Jemky asked in a tone of confusion.

"That we're going to die in three or four years, was what they said?" Mandrew added in kind, before shrugging his shoulders. "Well, although it's not the first time we've come close to dying."

"They're crazy; what gunshots could they talk about?" Melenky added as he began to take his meal. "Is it the accidental gunshots we've had when we took our dads' guns?"

"Oh, don't even remind me of that," Mandrew replied. "I still remember when I told you not to aim at me and that was the first thing you did."

"I didn't aim at you that time; you were the one who crossed the way while I was practicing my shot," Melenky replied.

"Well, anyway," Rocky said as he began to eat as well. "We just have to go to our dads to ask them for those sapphires with which we can heal these wounds and we all get out of here."

"Could it be that those people mentioned those sapphires when they said something about 'wounds not well healed'?" Melenky asked.

"Ah, they must be crazy," Jemky replied as he shrugged and ate. "Those sapphires with which our dads make that healing elixir have always healed us; don't you see that we don't have any scars?... And by the way, how could those crazy tamers have ended up after all this?"

The quartet continued eating their respective meals, while they talked normally now that the four were complete.

"Did Dixie really push that one-eyed tamer down the stairs?" Melenky asked as he was brought up to date.

"Yes... It was the last thing I saw before I fell asleep," Rocky replied. "I heard very clearly how he beat himself... and that was heard quite loudly; he must have broken his head."

"But at least we all came out of that massacre alive," Jemky added. "Wow, I didn't imagine that something like this would happen to us; although it's not the first time that an accident has happened to us where we almost died, I never thought I would have a real combat with guns."

The quartet continued to talk about the situation. When suddenly, Jemky stopped to look at Diddy, whose dull expression had not changed at all.

Diddy just kept sitting and didn't even look at the tray of fruits that had been brought to him.

"Hey," Jemky called, appearing next to him. "Aren't you going to eat or what?"

Diddy even glared at Jemky, and turned his back to ignore him.

"But I just asked you," Jemky replied. "You have to feed yourself; you haven't eaten anything."

"What's wrong with the monkey?" Melenky asked, looking at him strangely in the distance.

"Well... What happens, it's that..." Rocky replied before whispering in his ear about what was going on with Dixie, to which Melenky was surprised.

"Okay, don't feel bad, monkey," Jemky said, patting him on the back quickly. "Dixie will be fine after all... I mean, at least she'll rest, right?"

Suddenly, Diddy began to emit a slight sob and, unable to help it, he lowered his gaze and only limited himself to dropping a few tears but without showing them to any of those present. Even so, Jemky seemed to have noticed.

"Oh, hey, well," Jemky said, patting him more on the back. "Don't be sad... Someday you can get a new girlfriend," he added, cheering him up, according to him.

Diddy instantly turned to look at him angrily and gave him a strong push at the reckless very distasteful comment. Then, he lowered his gaze again and continued to cry silently, not letting himself see his face.

"Oh, okay, I just said," Jemky said, getting up again.

"Are you okay, Diddy?" Rocky asked, also appearing next to him. "By the way, you have to eat; this food is not so bad."

"Are you crying?" Melenky asked, appearing in front of him, to which Diddy turned in another direction in disgust.

"Hey, little monkey, are you still sad?" Mandrew asked him on the other hand.

Diddy was beginning to be quite uncomfortable with the presence of the four children, as he had the distinct feeling that they just wanted to make fun of him or make some play to him. He kept turning his back on them while they continued to talk to him. Until in a moment, he got tired of hearing them and having them around.

"Ugh... Leave me alone, please!" Diddy yelled, looking annoyed. "Don't talk to me if you all just come with your antics!"

"Hey, but we just came to tell you that you have to eat," Rocky said. "We just-"

"Well, I don't want to!" Diddy interrupted again, turning to them, before turning his back on them again and trying to hold back his tears in their presence. "I just want to... see Dixie!"

Even so, Diddy couldn't hold back, so he just lowered his head again as his tears rolled down non-stop and his sobs inevitably emitted. The quartet just looked at him quietly for a while, while looking at each other, as if they didn't know what to say anymore... Suddenly, Jemky began to be somewhat pensive.

"Guys!" Jemky whispered to the group. "Can you come for a while?... I want to talk to you about something."

The four of them walked away from Diddy's stretcher and onto one of theirs. Then, together they got close and began to murmur for a long time.

Diddy, on his part, was relieved to have gotten them away. Even if he felt they would be talking about him, he didn't care at all; he just wanted them to at least leave him alone to vent. In the midst of his thoughts, several moments with Dixie flashed through his mind... Above all, those happy moments, even when they were still just friends. Diddy also recalled how excited he was for her at the time. He thought... about how simple and happy everything would have been if both had started to date on the same DK Island, without so much detour, without so many complications... without as much misfortune as those that had happened to them so far. But all those thoughts only made Diddy feel worse and filled his eyes with abundant tears...

"Hey, monkey," Jemky called him, reappearing next to his stretcher along with the group. "We want to talk to you about something."

Diddy looked at them with extreme strangeness and even glared at them, as if he wanted to tell them again to get away from there. Even so, he also made an interrogatory gesture to them.

"Well... I think we can *help you* with Dixie," Jemky said with a broad smile, earning another look of weirdness from Diddy. "Yeah, that's the topic... We want to propose something that could *save Dixie*... I mean, we don't guarantee it'll work either, but we *think* it could save her and make her heal and wake up... even without injuries."

The four of them looked at him with wide smiles for a moment, while Diddy only made a gesture of disgust, as if he wanted to tell them that they spoke fallacies to 'make him feel better'.

"Hey, it's serious," Rocky said. "And no, we're not kidding if that's what you're thinking."

"With that, maybe you'll see Dixie wake up again," Melenky added with a cheerful look. "Look, do you remember-"

"And what makes you think I trust you?" Diddy interrupted, still looking at them in disgust.

"No, no, it's no joke," Jemky replied. "Do you remember when Dixie shot me or when you gave her that gift and a carnivorous plant came out? We're talking about that healing elixir that is used to heal wounds in a short time... It may also work for Dix-"

"You're plotting something, right?" Diddy interrupted, rolling his eyes at them.

"No! We're serious," Mandrew replied.

"Look, Diddy," Rocky added, "our dads carry some *sapphires*, with those we can make that healing mixture. We can tell our dads to give us some of those, we'll help you create it, and then you give it to Dixie."

"Although as I told you," Jemky continued, "it's no guarantee that it'll work, but... at least we can make the attempt. I'm just saying; if you want."

Diddy gave them another look of oddity, as if he didn't believe them at all. He was thinking with total firmness that it was all a joke and that they just wanted to take him for a fool as they had done on previous occasions, both being themselves and being the Jennies. Then, Diddy just turned his back on them again and ignored them completely; he was sick of always believing things easily.

"Hey, we're not lying; we can really help you and Dixie," Jemky replied. "Isn't that what you want so much right now? That Dixie recovers and wakes up?"

Diddy continued to ignore them, as if they weren't there; he didn't even answer them anymore or look at them.

"Or you know what?" Jemky told the group. "Let's ask our dads for those sapphires at once."

"Yeah, you're right," Mandrew added.

"Hey, but wait a minute," Rocky interrupted. "And how are we supposed to get into the room where our dads are? I mean... that door has been secured so that we don't enter."

"Well, let's check if it's not secured right now," Jemky said. "Otherwise, we could enter through the window, there is no other."

The quartet continued to murmur, and went to the door to leave that room, but not before observing everywhere that no one was around. Then, they just retreated, leaving Diddy alone.

Diddy, on his part, was still with an empty, dull expression. It was obvious that he did not believe at all what the quartet told him.

Meanwhile, the quartet had made their way to the door to the recovery room where the adult apes were. Immediately, they tried to open the door, which for their luck, was not secured. The four of them peeked out little by little until they completely entered the room, sneaking the door shut.

Inside that room, there was the whole quintet of apes lying down, who were asleep and did not seem to notice the presence of their children... if they were their children.

"How do we tell them?" Mandrew whispered in an almost silent voice.

"I think I have an idea to make them hand them to us instantly.," Jemky said in the same tone. "How about we say Melenky is about to die?"

"And why am I?!" Melenky replied quietly.

"It'll be just an example," Jemky reaffirmed. "Let's go! And hide, Melenky."

The four kids began to head towards the apes, except for Melenky, who crouched down so as not to be in sight of the apes.

"Make sad faces," Jemky whispered to the group. "Even pretend you're crying for Melenky."

A while passed later, while Diddy was still sitting with his legs hugged and his gaze lowered; he didn't feel like doing anything at all, and he just wished he had the power to close his eyes and wake up on Hurricane Island... along with Dixie.

Suddenly, he heard the door of the room open. The quartet entered stealthy, smiling victoriously at Diddy after he turned to look at them.

"Here they are, monkey," Rocky said, lifting his hand and showing three small blue and shining sapphires.

Diddy finally changed his expression, although not exactly to a cheerful one, but to a look of strangeness.

"We told you we'd get them," Rocky added with a small smile. "And it's very easy to do, we'll only need to tear these sapphires to pieces and mix them with hydrogen peroxide... And that's all."

All the quartet showed a smile towards Diddy, while he continued to look at them strangely and even glared, before turning his back on them again.

"Hey, you still don't believe us?" Jemky said, his hands at his sides. "It's the healing elixir, the same one with which we healed Dixie's arm and the same one with which I was healed from that shot, just look at my chest without a scar... and I almost bled completely to death that time."

"What's more, we're also going to prepare it for us," Rocky added. "Even you can also use it, Diddy, it'll heal your wound in just hours, so we all will get out of here quickly... Well, and if you're wondering what will happen next, I don't know what you'll do along with Dixie, but we'll escape with our dads from here, and we don't know if they'll still want to kill you two before we leave... But yes, the healing mixture may save Dixie."

"We have to find something to crush those sapphires," Mandrew told the group. "And also, to look for that hydrogen peroxide."

"I've heard that hospitals usually have labs," Rocky said pensively. "We'll have to look if there is one here."

"Well, what are we waiting for? Let's look for it," Jemky added. "And hey, Diddy, come with us if you want."

"No," Diddy replied coldly and still turning his back on them.

"Don't you really-"

"You are lying, I know!" Diddy interrupted before looking at them again. "I know you're plotting something, as you have done in the past! You just want to hurt Dixie more!"

"Hey, hey, hey, first of all," Rocky replied, "if we wanted to hurt Dixie, we wouldn't even be suggesting this to you to try to save her, I mean... if nothing is done, it's certain that Dixie will... you know, she'll never wake up again; those same doctors said it."

"So, go make that mixture, take it or whatever and there *I could* be believing you," Diddy replied, although with some irony.

"Okay, then we'll go," Rocky replied before signaling to retreat. "Let's go, guys."

The quartet shrugged and, without arguing anything else, went back to the door to leave that room.

Diddy, on the other hand, only rolled his eyes after the quartet closed the door and left him alone again... When suddenly, he felt some curiosity.

"Are you sure it's here?" Melenky whispered with an almost silent volume.

"Most likely, yes, and there's no one, luckily," Rocky replied in kind.

The four kids were hidden under a table from where they could see an open door, in which some devices were seen inside that room. This room was with the lights off, so there was no presence of people. Then, watching that no one came around, the four ran towards that room.

"It looks like a laboratory," Rocky said, looking closely at that room. "Now we just have to look for a device to crush those sapphires... And close the door, by the way! No one has to see us."

Melenky hurriedly closed the door and then turned on the lights. Indeed, that room did appear to be a laboratory... Something similar to what the apes had, but this one looked less intimidating and without devices that gave the appearance of being for evil purposes.

"Let's try those devices over there," Jemky pointed to some metal objects. "They look a lot like the ones our dads used."

The four children went to one of the countertops that were in that place, on which those devices were. Then, they took one in particular, which looked a lot like one the apes had in their lab and that Diddy and Dixie had previously used to create the elixir that 'revived' Jenny's quartet. When suddenly... they heard a noise as if an object had moved in that room, which instantly scared them and they turned to see where it had come from.

"W-what was that?!" Melenky exclaimed in a trembling voice. "It doesn't seem to be a person."

"Maybe it was just an insect," Mandrew said with a shrug.

"Wait a minute..." Jemky said, looking suspiciously and heading towards that corner.

Suddenly, a small silhouette seemed to be seen behind those countertops, which showed certain red garments. This silhouette seemed to want to run away as Jemky chased after it, but the quartet managed to distinguish him.

"But it's the monkey!" Melenky exclaimed, pointing. "Didn't he want to come?"

A couple of seconds later, the silhouette was completely visible and belonged to no one but Diddy, who came out slowly and with a doubtful look towards the quartet.

"And didn't you say you weren't coming, monkey?" Jemky asked, frowning with his hands at his sides.

"Oh... okay, I just wanted to see what you would do," Diddy replied after rolling his eyes and sighing. "I thought you would go somewhere else."

"And you really still think we were joking?" Rocky said the same way Jemky did. "Of course we're going to make that mixture; we'll even use it for ourselves."

"Hey, how do we use this?" Melenky asked as he held the device with Mandrew, which appeared to be heavy.

"You just have to plug it in, put these sapphires in it and turn it on," Diddy said suddenly and seriously. "And use a separate container to collect the powdered pieces."

The four kids looked at him weirdly for a few seconds.

"And... that's all?" Mandrew asked, keeping his gaze. "And how do you know that?"

"Dixie and I used the same device to try to revive the Jennies," Diddy replied.

"Ahh, that," Jemky said, before looking at it with some anger toward Diddy. "The moment when our dads *gave us that beating because of your fault.*"

"Look, shut up, you all deserved it for *making fun of Dixie and me*, especially you," Diddy replied in the same way before rolling his eyes. "By the way, and why did you want to do this about creating that healing mixture and supposedly 'help' us?"

"I hate to admit it, monkey, but... you made me feel sorry on this occasion," Jemky replied earnestly and with a shrug. "And I felt sorry for Dixie too; knowing there's no saving her."

The four children began to try to turn on the device and then introduce the sapphires. Meanwhile, Diddy continued to watch them with a doubtful look; even if he was starting to believe them a little, he wanted to be sure the quartet wasn't playing a bad joke on him.

"By the way... and how did you survive the storm?" Diddy asked them as they did the procedure.

"Well, we were still immune, even to drowning," Mandrew replied. "And later, out of nowhere, we were caught by those crazy tamers and taken with our dads to those cages."

"And then they said they were going to kill all of us and they were even going to mechanize us," Rocky added. "But then those tamers came out screaming angrily because they heard on the news that their plane crashed and that they had you, my father, and Uncle Will in this hospital. And then it was that our dads took advantage of an oversight of the tamers to escape all together and come here for the two ones who were missing. But you know... those tamers caught up with us and almost killed us all here, even Dixie got involved in the fight while you were still asleep."

"The sapphire powder is ready," Jemky said as he finished collecting the powder in a container. "And it's quite a lot from what I see. And now what do we do?"

"We have to mix it in that peroxide hydrogen and that's all," Rocky replied. "Let's look in these drawers here."

The quartet set out to do as indicated and went to one of the shelves nearby to check the products inside. It took them a few minutes to search, until they found a large jar of hydrogen peroxide. They filled the container with that liquid and then mixed it using any vertical object that they found at random. Later, they took another smaller container and poured some of the mixture into it and then gave it to Diddy... which earned another look of strangeness from him.

"And this?" Diddy asked with a doubtful expression.

"You just have to pour it on Dixie," Rocky replied. "It can be just on her hand and then you press it. We asked our dads and they told us we just have to do that... Just in case, we told them that it was Melenky who was about to fall asleep forever, so they wanted to answer us with the truth."

"Come on, go to see if you can save Dixie," Mandrew said. "Although just one thing... It might take her until tomorrow to wake up, you know Dixie is in serious condition."

"Yeah. And by the way, use it for your wound too, monkey," Jemky added before speaking to the group. "Well, and what are we waiting for? Let's heal also our wounds."

Jemky was going to proceed to remove the bandages he had on his wound to pour the mixture... until they heard footsteps near the door.

"Hide!" Jemky whispered to everyone.

The five kongs quickly went to hide under some countertops near the door, holding their respective wounds on the way. Suddenly, one of the people entered the laboratory and, while she did not see, the quartet gestured among them to leave, including Diddy as well.

A few seconds later, the five little kongs had left that laboratory, and continued to try to make their way to their recovery room as fast as they could, taking care not to make any sudden movements that hurt their wounds.

A couple of minutes later, they had safely reached their recovery room, where they secured the door as soon as they entered.

"I thought it would be harder," Melenky said, smiling and sighing.

"Well, alright, let's heal our wounds!" Jemky exclaimed, lifting the sapphire mixture. "Use it too, monkey," he said to Diddy.

Then, Jemky removed his bandage and proceeded to pour the mixture over his wound... but not before Rocky stopped him.

"Wait a minute!" Rocky told Jemky. "You'd better lie down before; remember that the healing mixture burns a lot."

The four kids went to their respective stretchers while Jemky continued to hold the container with the mixture. Then, very carefully, Jemky poured the mixture on his wound... which caused him an enormous burning when making contact with it, and made him emit a few shrieks of pain.

"Darn, this burns worse than the *wound itself*!" Jemky yelled, clutching his wound and complaining of pain, before desperately extending the container to Mandrew. "Take it, take it quickly!"

Mandrew rushed to take the mixture and did the same with his arm wound... making him also scream in pain. Then, Melenky took and did the same with the mixture too and, of course, also emitted a louder shriek. Finally, Rocky took the now empty container; he did not use the mixture since he did not have any serious injuries.

Diddy just watched the scene as the quartet held tightly their wounds and complained a lot in pain. He continued holding the small container with the amount of mixture he had been given, and watched it; he kept doubting a little bit of its effectiveness in a way.

A couple of minutes later, the quartet began to calm down as they put the bandages back on their wounds.

"Hey, monkey, and don't you think to use that mixture?" Jemky asked Diddy wearily. "What are you waiting for? Heal your wound too; we'll surely all be fine tomorrow."

Diddy was silent for a few seconds. He looked again at the blue mixture while wondering if it would be a good idea to listen to the quartet, even though he had already seen them use it.

"And so... I just have to pour this on one of Dixie's hands?" Diddy asked, still looking at the mixture with some suspicion. "That is, she has been almost completely affected."

"According to our dads, we just had to do that," Jemky replied. "As I told you: we don't guarantee it'll work, but you can try anyways. It's likely that you'll see Dixie wake up tomorrow as soon as you wake up."

After thinking about it for another minute, Diddy looked towards the quartet with extreme seriousness, and then turned to head to the door and leave, but not before giving the quartet one last serious look. With that said, Diddy walked out of the room and headed towards where Dixie was.

It took a couple of minutes to reach the room where Dixie was, with no people around. Diddy carefully entered the room and closed the door immediately. He went and climbed onto Dixie's stretcher, where he could see her once more...

Dixie remained motionless and just as she had been seen last time, which only filled Diddy with anguish again and made tears fall from his eyes as he dried them, even if the devices Dixie was wearing indicated that she still had vital signs. Then, even if he still had some distrust of the quartet, Diddy took Dixie's hand and extended it. He began to pour half of the blue mixture he had, and finally pressed the palm of her hand to absorb it. A procedure like that seemed pretty harmless, so Diddy was starting to stop having doubts about whether the quartet would be playing a bad joke on him... Although due to that same simplicity, he also had doubts about whether the four children had given him the instructions well.

Seconds later, Diddy just stared at Dixie; he couldn't help but shed other tears and even sobbed again. Then, while still holding the container with one hand, with the other he took Dixie's hand for a while and intertwined his fingers with hers.

"Dixie... I'll always love you," he told her as tears continued to roll down his face, wishing she could hear him at that moment.

Then, Diddy let go of her hand so he could wipe away his tears. Suddenly, he was having several happy memories about Dixie, but at that moment they only made him sad. The thought that the next day Dixie wouldn't wake up anymore, only overwhelmed him more and more, at the same time that he wondered what could happen after that possible Dixie's outcome occurred; he wondered, above all, how he would later return to DK Island without her or, first of all... if he could return to DK Island like that.

In the midst of his unstoppable crying, Diddy was going to get off Dixie's stretcher, but not before he had given her a hug... begging with all his might that this would not be the last one he could give her, while caressing her hair a little. Then, Diddy was going to go to the door, but suddenly, he had the idea of staying and sleeping in that same room, not caring that people could find him later and take him out.

There were about five more stretchers in that room, where Diddy climbed into one of them to lie down to rest, having Dixie in sight with the slightest hope that the next day he would be able to see

her again. Suddenly, Diddy remembered that he was carrying the container in his hand and that he had also to try that healing mixture to heal his own wound... But Diddy didn't feel able to take any more pain at the time and wanted to give up. Even so, he removed the bandage from his wound and began pouring the mixture on it. Instantly, Diddy felt a huge burning in his wound and had to restrain himself so as not to scream in pain. He spent even a couple of minutes bearing and clutching his wound with the bandage, until later, he felt relief again while breathing heavily. Diddy finished putting on the bandage well and took a deep breath when his pain had already become milder.

A couple of minutes later, Diddy had calmed down... though that calm went away again after looking back at Dixie in the distance. He just let out a few last tears, before he could close his eyes to try to sleep.

Chapter 82: Visions

"Dixie... Dixie... Come, my little girl..."

"W-what?" she said, while having her eyes half closed and trying to keep them open.

Dixie was straining her vision for a few seconds, and she seemed to hear murmurs whose voices sounded quite *familiar* to her... She felt an enormous tranquility both inside and outside of her, while a white environment in its entirety was visible.

"You're here, my little Dixie," one of those voices she could hear said. This voice sounded so sweet that just hearing it gave her a certain peace... a peace she seemed not to have had for a long time...

"We're very happy to see you again, my little girl," another of the voices added with the same sweet tone as the previous one.

Suddenly, Dixie could open her eyes completely and see these silhouettes that were talking to her. She would get a reaction of astonishment and excitement upon seeing them, but no... Instead, she just looked at them and smiled like it was an ordinary quiet day...

"Hi, Mom. Hi, Dad," Dixie said, smiling calmly at those two primate silhouettes.

"Come on, my little girl," one of the two of them said, taking her by the hand and starting to walk with her.

Dixie just nodded and accompanied both adult kongs as if nothing. One of those kongs was a tall male chimpanzee, with light brown fur, green eyes and light brown hair, while the other kong was a female chimpanzee of the same fur, but with blond hair like Dixie's and blue eyes. Both were walking hand in hand with Dixie, although no specific direction could be seen.

"Where are we going?" Dixie asked, starting to look at them with some strangeness.

Both adult kongs looked at her while still smiling sweetly at her.

"You're coming to join us, Dixie," the female chimpanzee said, who seemed to be her mother. "We'll stay together."

"We'll be with you too, Dixie," a voice distinct from the kongs present said.

Dixie looked straight ahead and noticed another *couple of adult kongs*, who were also smiling sweetly at her. One of those kongs was a female chimpanzee with light brown fur, green eyes and brown hair, quite similar to the chimpanzee who seemed to be Dixie's father. While the other kong next was a male muscular gorilla, tall and dark brown fur.

"Oh, hello, aunt and uncle, how are you?" Dixie told the new silhouettes, to whom she smiled back in a serene way.

But suddenly... Dixie's smile began to dim until it turned into a doubtful look.

"Uh, hey..." she said, stopping in her tracks and making them all stop. "Wait a minute... and where's Tiny?... And Kiddy? And Chunky?"

The four adult apes also faded their smiles, but they kept looking at her calmly.

"They won't come yet, Dixie," her father replied. "Only you'll come for now, my little girl."

Suddenly, Dixie began to blink rapidly, as the white stage disappeared from her sight along with her parents and those who seemed to be her aunt and uncle.

"Mom?! Dad?!... Hey, where are you?!" Dixie exclaimed, having certain distortions in sight. "Aunt, uncle! What's wrong?!"

Suddenly, Dixie had several visions through her eyes... Among these, she could clearly see that terrible event that happened with her parents and also that with the apes and her aunt and uncle, followed by random memories on DK Island, the circus, Hurricane Island, the ape building, the ship, the aircraft and finally that medical clinic... Everything seemed to have happened to her for about five seconds.

"W-what?!" Dixie exclaimed, opening her eyes to the fullest.

That white environment along with the silhouettes of her parents and aunt and uncle reappeared in front of her; the four of them kept looking at her smiling. Suddenly, and as if recovering her senses, Dixie began to breathe agitated and felt enormous tension when she noticed where she was.

"Come, Dixie, we have to go," her father said, holding her hand again and smiling sweetly.

"Hey, no, no, wait a minute!" Dixie exclaimed, pulling her hand away instantly and tensing up. "Where are you going to take me?... And why am I seeing all of you?!"

"We're going to take you with us, Dixie," her mother said, still smiling at her despite the reaction she was having.

"No, wait!... Are you telling me that...?" Dixie began to breathe faster as she began to remember *what* was the last thing she had done and *why* she was there at that moment. "No, no, no, it can't be possible!... I can't go with you now!"

"But you have to come, my little one," her mother said, gently holding her hand. "You've come this far."

"But I can't!" Dixie exclaimed, beginning to be on the verge of tears. "I mean, what will happen to Tiny, Kiddy and Chunky?"

"They're fine, Dixie," her mother said, placing a hand on her shoulder. "They all are fine--"

"But they don't know anything about me! And I left them!" Dixie replied in despair. "I can't leave them! And I was away from DK Island... I don't even know where I was!..."

"I'm sorry to say this, my little girl, but you're going to have to come," her mother added, beginning to look pitied.

"But I can't!" Dixie replied as tears rolled down her face.

Suddenly, both Dixie's parents and aunt and uncle stopped smiling and looked at her seriously, at the same time that Dixie burst into tears completely.

"Hey... I can't," Dixie exclaimed through tears. "I really want to go with you!... I'd give anything for us to be all together again... But I can't go now... I still have to go back to DK Island, I can't leave Tiny, Kiddy and Chunky... And I can't... leave Diddy alone in that place."

A few seconds later, Dixie's parents went to hug her for a moment, while she continued to shed tears, but a minute later... she felt a slight calm that even stopped her crying completely; she had almost the same calm again that she had at the beginning... Then, she hugged her parents back, and then her aunt and uncle joined the family moment too. Suddenly... Dixie had a relieving feeling, as if her life was restarting for a moment.

Later, they all separated, but her parents were still by her side to talk to her.

"We're going to be fine, my little girl," her mother said, returning to a sweet tone and comforting her. "You were a very strong and very sweet girl."

"We'll stay with you forever," his father added in the same way. "You'll never suffer here and we'll never be separated."

"By the way... and who was that little monkey called *Diddy*?" her mother asked, looking at her somewhat doubtfully.

"Uh, well... he's my friend," Dixie replied with some insecurity. "H-he's my best friend, actually."

"Hmm, are you sure he was just... your *friend*?" her father asked again, staring at her, which earned a somewhat embarrassed gesture from Dixie and hesitant to answer them. But suddenly, the chimpanzee only gave her a serene smile again. "It's okay, don't worry... You don't need to explain, we do know it. We know everything that has happened... The little monkey is a good boy anyways."

Dixie only gave a forced smile while also feeling somewhat embarrassed to touch that topic.

"And don't worry, Diddy is all right," her mother told her. "In fact... he's also waiting for you... just like everyone is waiting for you two on DK Island, even though everyone there is fine. In fact... they did receive the letters you sent them."

"But... we still have to go to DK Island," Dixie replied in a melancholy tone.

"Dixie..." her father said, holding her hand. "I promise you, we'll be here well."

Suddenly, a burst of flickering light appeared all around, calming down within a few seconds, but scaring Dixie immediately.

"Oh, well..." Dixie's mother said, looking around with the other three adult kongs.

"What? What's wrong?!" Dixie asked, looking worried.

Dixie's parents and aunt and uncle stared at her, and then smiled at her, although this time as if they were a little pitied at the same time.

"It seems that... it's not your time yet, Dixie," her father said with a faint smile. "You'll be able to return."

"Really?!" Dixie exclaimed, smiling suddenly and feeling an emotion coming back... Although a few seconds later, she was also overcome with some sadness upon seeing her four absent loved ones. "B-but... and you..."

"No, little daughter... We will stay here," her father told her, also pitied. "We can't return... you know it. And you know how much we would have liked to be with you all for much longer, and teach you more things... and accompany you all in everything that happens to you."

"But it's that..." Dixie uttered, again with tears in her eyes, before expelling them.

Dixie hurriedly hugged them again, including her aunt and uncle; this time she was a little calmer and only wiped a couple of tears. When they separated from the embrace, everyone looked at her in a sweet way.

"Dixie..." her father said, caressing her hair. "We know you still have to return and you have a lot to live, my little girl."

"And take care of Tiny..." her mother added. "Tell her that you two will always be our greatest treasures... and accompany Kiddy and Chunky; always stay united and supportive."

"And tell the two of them too that we'll always love them," the other chimpanzee said, who was her aunt.

"We'll never forget them," the gorilla, who was her uncle, added. "We'll always accompany you all, from where we are."

"But I... I'm going to miss you too..." Dixie told them sadly and wiping away a tear, "just like every day since you left..."

"Someday we'll be together again," her mother said, smiling at her. "Meanwhile, take care of yourself and take good care of each other, the four of you. Don't stop staying strong, my child, keep living and finding reasons to continue as you have done so far. And forgive us for not being able to continue staying with you... We'll only have to see you all grow from this place."

"We'll always love you..." her father added in the same way. "You're strong, my little girl... and I just want you to keep it up... no matter what obstacle tries to snatch your happiness again."

"I will..." Dixie replied, wiping away a tear and giving a slight smile before looking at them. "I promise..."

The four primates stood up again as they continued to smile at Dixie, who was again witnessing that burst of flickering light.

"Dixie..." her mother said, approaching her again and showing some concern. "And forgive us for not having been able to protect you from those tamers that time they attacked us... We've always tried to keep you all safe from them..."

Suddenly, in the middle of the burst of light, Dixie looked at them with some strangeness at the last thing her mother told her.

"What?..." Dixie asked with some confusion. "What did you say, Mom?... What do you mean with '*always*'?... Wait, wait!... *Mom! Dad!*..."

That burst of light was becoming more and more repetitive that seemed to be blinding Dixie's vision until it turned dark again in its entirety...

Chapter 83: Happy Reunion

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Diddy was starting to open his eyes and regain track of time. He rubbed his eyes before he could get up completely as he looked around with his bleary eyes.

Although something curious he felt inside him, and it was that... he didn't seem to be feeling physical discomfort or anything like that. Then, he observed his bandaged wound and, as if curiosity was invading him, he began to remove the bandage slowly. He should have felt pain in doing so, but instead... he just opened his eyes to the fullest while now seeing a stitched wound but with only a small "scratch". Diddy hadn't remembered having that part of his skin so healthy for days; it seemed that this mixture that had been given to him was effective, although it still had to heal completely.

He started smiling a little, until he looked sideways... and noticed that Dixie was still sleeping. Before despair and uncertainty took hold of him, Diddy took a heavy breath and began to head towards her stretcher. Upon arriving, he gathered strength as he prayed in his mind that Dixie would give signs, and began to move her arm slightly.

"Dixie..." he called her, whispering. "D-Dixie... can you... hear me?"

But suddenly, Diddy was again overcome by uncertainty when he saw... that Dixie didn't respond yet.

"Dixie!" he called her again, raising his voice and struggling not to panic. "Dixie..."

Diddy wanted to think that the mixture would still take time to work on Dixie as he had been told, but he also couldn't help but think that maybe it could have done wrong... in addition to remembering that those people had mentioned that it was possible that Dixie would no longer wake up from that day. Diddy just stopped to look at her as his eyes began to moisten again.

"Dixie..." he said in a breathy voice and about to sob.

Suddenly, the door of the room opened and Diddy turned to look at a group of three doctors entering, who were astonished to see him.

"Oh, here again, little monkey," one of the people said, going to take him in their arms. "We already told you that you can't be here nor get too agitated... Come, we have to examine you."

Then, that person began to leave that room, carrying Diddy... while he gave one last distressed look at Dixie, who was being examined by the other two people.

Diddy just lowered his gaze, and his spirits faded again like the day before; he really had some hope of seeing Dixie wake up that day.

Dixie was still in a deep sleep and with no signs of waking up. Meanwhile, a couple of people were examining her with tools. One of those people went to some shelves to look for something for a

couple of minutes... When suddenly, the other person, who was still checking Dixie, turned to look with a huge expression of astonishment.

"Hey!" that person called to the other, with a shocked expression. "Y-you have to see this about the little chimpanzee."

On the other hand, Diddy had been taken to the recovery room where he was before with the quartet. They placed him on his stretcher, and then handed him a tray with fruit like the day before, as well as the quartet, who had already begun to eat his appetizers while watching Diddy curiously. Upon finishing, the people withdrew.

This time, and although his mood was all absent, Diddy did decide to try that food; after all, hunger had not been long in coming to him.

"Hey, monkey," Jemky called him later as they finished eating. "Did your wound healed?... Because ours do."

"Well, not entirely," Mandrew added. "But at least it doesn't hurt anymore. In a few days it may heal completely."

"That healing elixir is the best!" Melenky exclaimed, jumping with excitement, not holding his wounds this time. "How did it go, Diddy?"

Diddy, putting the tray aside, just looked at them with some disappointment before lowering his gaze again.

"Yeah... it has healed me too," Diddy replied without wanting to look at them.

The four of them looked at him strangely, seeing that he did not recover his mood as should be expected.

"And... Dixie is also already cured, isn't she?" Rocky asked with a forced smile. "Did it work for her?"

"No..." Diddy replied in a weak voice.

Diddy turned his back on them again, and lowered his gaze to continually let out his tears again. The four kids stared at him seriously as they looked at each other. Then, they headed to Diddy's stretcher.

"Hey, but did you put that healing mixture right?" Rocky asked.

"Yes... just like you told me," Diddy replied, not caring that they saw him cry now. "But Dixie remains the same way."

"How strange; our dads told us that was like that," Jemky said with a shrug, before patting Diddy's arm softly. "Oh, I'm so sorry, little monkey," he added in a compassionate tone, even if it was very strange for Diddy to see the four of them with that soft attitude.

"Or maybe Dixie will wake up later," Melenky said. "Maybe it still doesn't have an effect on her at all, so cheer up, Diddy!"

"And you know anything else?" Rocky added, smiling with some excitement. "You won't need revenge on those tamers. You know what I heard the doctors here say? That those tamers are in another hospital and that they're *in critical conditions*, that they cannot even walk and cannot get up."

"Yeah, and that they're facing a difficult recovery," Mandrew added, in amazement, before whispering. "They say that the tamer who only had one forearm, now won't be able to get up because he was shot in several parts. And that the tamer who had that false leg was left with serious wounds on his face that he cannot even see."

"And you know what happened to the one-eyed tamer?" Jemky added with the same expression. "They say that he's going to be left without his other eye because in addition to the shots that Dixie gave him, he also hit himself when he fell down the stairs and broke his head."

"So, those evil men had their *comeuppance*," Melenky said, smiling in the same way and as if he were just telling a normal anecdote. "You're not going to have to worry about them... We heard that they'll even be sent straight to jail as soon as they recover," he added, whispering and still smiling.

"They won't be sent straight to jail, Melenky," Rocky reaffirmed. "The people said there are suspicions against them for animal trafficking and a few other things, but they won't be locked up until there's some evidence to prove it... I don't understand it well, really. And our dads don't even want to explain to us... Well, if they're *still* our dads."

"Of course they are," Jemky said. "They said that we're their children anyway."

The four of them continued to talk to each other, while Diddy was still downcast and only turned on his back once more, wiping his eyes every second.

Suddenly, the door of the room opened, and other people came in to see all the kongs present.

"Hey, what are you doing?" one of the people told the quartet, heading to them. "Go back to your stretchers."

The people put the quartet back in their respective positions, and then began to examine each one. They even gave them what appeared to be medicines... with some difficulty at the time of giving them to the quartet, since they became very restless as always.

"I still don't believe that about the little chimpanzee," one of the people said with a puzzled expression. "I mean... she was-"

"Don't say it in front of the little monkey!" the person who was examining Diddy muttered. "He could escape to go see her and running could hurt him."

Diddy opened his eyes to the fullest when he heard those words from the people, at the same time he felt something in his chest not being so sure if it was something bad. He felt enormous tension as he was consumed by the desire to run out to see Dixie.

"Maybe Dixie woke up," Melenky said, smiling at Diddy in the distance.

Even so, Diddy did not want to create high expectations, because otherwise, his world would only fall apart; the thought that Dixie had only gotten worse, kept haunting his mind.

Later, people walked out of the room, leaving the five kong children alone. Meanwhile, Diddy was just shaking with nerves and with all the curiosity and uncertainty alive to know what was going on with Dixie.

"Are you going to see Dixie?" Rocky asked.

Diddy just waited for a while for people not to come again, and then hurried down the stretcher in one jump to leave that room. He made sure everywhere that no one could see him, and began to run as fast as he could to the room where Dixie was, this time without feeling pain in his wound as he moved.

A few minutes later, Diddy arrived at the door of that room and, observing for the last time that no one was nearby, began to open it, with his eyes closed tightly and hoping to get some news about Dixie. Then, he went in and looked straight at the stretcher where Dixie was... Suddenly, his heart had a slight acceleration, and he got an expression of extreme astonishment when he saw Dixie... She appeared to be making *slight movements on her own*, while her eyes were narrowed and blinking. In addition, it seemed that the people had taken away certain devices that she had before.

Diddy began to breathe faster, as he felt as if something inside him was taking hope again. Without thinking any more, he headed to Dixie's stretcher, and stopped in front of her to see her.

"D-Dixie?" he said, giving her a few slight movements on the shoulder when he saw that she, in fact, seemed to be breathing and presenting some blinks in her sleepy eyes. "Dixie..."

Suddenly, Dixie aimed her gaze at Diddy, and as if in one fell swoop, she opened her eyes completely and got a shocked expression as if she had returned from a deep sleep.

"Didd... D-Diddy?..." she began to utter, as her breathing gained strength.

"Dixie!" Diddy exclaimed, feeling an enormous acceleration in his heartbeat and taking her shoulders. "Are you..."

Dixie now seemed to have gained more strength, and began to move her arms to even try to get up without problems. Diddy was still breathing heavily as a smile appeared on his face that he hadn't had for days.

"Dixie!" he exclaimed, taking her face and shoulders as he saw her now with her eyes open.

"Diddy..." she said as if she had finished processing what was happening. Then, she stood up and took Diddy's face in amazement as well. "D-Diddy?" she added, starting to smile. "Diddy!... Y-you're awake!" she exclaimed with a sudden joy.

"And you too!" he replied, adopting the same expression. "Dixie!"

Suddenly, and with moistened eyes, Diddy hurriedly hugged her with all the excitement he could feel at that very moment. Instantly, Dixie also wrapped her arms around his torso and kept clinging to him as her eyes began to let out continuous tears.

"Dixie!..."

"Diddy!..."

At the time, both just let the tears come out of their eyes freely, even if the ones fell on the other, while emitting continuous sobs. They held each other for almost a minute as they let out their tears in heaps and every second, although it was due to the joy this time. Both felt as if a part of them was reborn, as if the universe had taken pity on both of them.

Later, both separated and saw each other's faces while they had their eyes all moistened, in turn that between the two they showed a joy that they had not had for a long time, and they did not stop holding hands or shoulders with that same emotion.

"I can't believe it, you're fine, Dixie!" Diddy exclaimed, still smiling or shedding tears. "You're okay, right?"

"I guess so," Dixie replied in kind. "I feel completely fine... and much more if you are too."

"Of course I am," Diddy replied, still smiling, before looking sad and giving low sobs. "I thought... that I'd never see you again, Dix..."

"Me too... Diddy," she replied, having the same expression, before taking his face and caressing his cheeks. "I thought we wouldn't be here anymore..."

Then, Diddy only let out other tears and hugged Dixie again, this time in a sweet way and caressing her hair. They both felt as if their lives had been restarted by being close to each other and as if the universe was smiling on them again.

Later, both separated while still looking at each other and smiling again. Then, Dixie stopped to look sideways and made a gesture of strangeness.

"W-what happened, by the way?" Dixie asked with some concern. "Are we still in this place? What day is it?"

"I wanted to ask you the same thing," Diddy replied. "I just woke up here yesterday. I think we've been in this strange place for about five day-"

Suddenly, both heard some murmurs nearby, accompanied by footsteps behind the door.

"Pretend to be asleep, Dixie!" Diddy exclaimed quickly.

Diddy hurried off the stretcher and hid under it. He was going to look for a better hiding place, but time did not give him more when a couple of people had already entered the room. Meanwhile, Dixie laid down and barely closed only one eye while with the other she saw those people.

"Oh, look! The little chimpanzee is awake," one of the people said, who caught sight of Dixie moving anyway.

The two people headed to see Dixie, while she was just trying to stay neutral when they started examining and even lifting her up.

"But she looks all fine, all healthy," the person said, looking at her in amazement. "How could this be possible? We were sure that she could no longer recover; I mean... the amount of tranquilizer had affected much of her internal organism."

"This could only have been a miracle, definitely," the other person added, smiling in amazement. "It's the only explanation, it must have been a miracle."

"Wait a minute..." the other person said, who seemed to have seen something under Dixie's stretcher, where Diddy was in his attempt to hide. "Oh, the little monkey again," they added, looking at Diddy.

The people took Diddy in their arms, although this time he was calm.

"I guess he did hear us talking about the chimpanzee and that's why he came to see her," the person holding Diddy commented.

"It's evident that both of them are very close," the other person added with a little laugh. "And well, I suppose that the two must have already seen that they're safe and sound."

"Alright, little monkey," one of the people told Diddy. "It seems that your little friend is fine, but we still have to do some checkups on her, so you have to wait for us for a while, okay?"

Diddy looked towards Dixie immediately, as if he wanted to make sure that she didn't be scared of people, but she just smiled at him and nodded, as if telling him that she already knew them and wouldn't have to worry.

Then, Diddy was taken to the recovery room again, although this time, he was no longer tense and nodded normally. Meanwhile, Dixie still stayed in the same room for people to give her one last exam.

A half hour later, Diddy was alone in the recovery room, he had even taken a short rest. Jemky's quartet was not present at that moment, as the doctors seemed to have taken them elsewhere.

Later, Diddy turned to look at the door after it opened and people entered. He could only smile this time upon seeing Dixie arriving with them; he was already looking forward to seeing her so safe and sound again, he even felt his eyes returning to moisten a little with joy. Being able to see her was what he wanted most at that moment.

The people left Dixie on another of the empty stretchers and even put her pink beret back on. She looked pretty good as if she had nothing wrong.

"I still don't believe it, how could it be possible?" one of the people commented, still in amazement at seeing Dixie. "It was clear that we saw that this little chimpanzee no longer had hope of life, but now that they did other tests... she looks all healthy, even more so than when she first arrived here."

"But anyways, it's a thing to be happy about," another person added, smiling and moving Dixie's stretcher next to Diddy's. "Finally, these two little ones can see each other again; they even look happier now."

"Yeah, we can see that they both love each other very much... And well, they should still be at rest anyway, but maybe we can already evaluate them psychologically; the other four little ones have already begun to be treat-"

Suddenly, the door opened and another of the doctors appeared, who was somewhat agitated.

"Hey, can you come and help us?!" he pleaded with the other people inside the room. "Those four little ones are too restless!"

"Oh, no, I saw it coming," one of the people replied. "Okay, we're going right now."

Then, the people who were with Diddy and Dixie left them both on their respective stretchers, and left the room along with the other person who had arrived.

A few seconds later, Diddy and Dixie looked at each other and smiled. Then, Dixie hurried down from her stretcher and ran to Diddy so she could hug him again, to which he reciprocated with the same excitement. Both stared at each other for a few seconds with so much joy, one they hadn't had for a long time.

"Oh, Dixie... you don't know how happy I'm to see you," Diddy said, holding her hands and looking at her with such emotion, as if nothing else mattered at that moment. "I-I thought... you wouldn't wake up again and..."

"I know, Diddy," she replied in kind. "I was also so afraid for you... I mean, those darn apes almost killed you on the plane! But... I'm really glad you were okay," she added before looking at the area where he had been hit. "Oh, by the way, are you still hurt, Diddy?!"

"Oh, no, no, I'm not anymore," Diddy replied, showing the bandage where he had his wound and even showing it to Dixie. "I mean, I was; I woke up here and I saw that I had this wound... and that you were asleep too, of course. Is it true that those tamers were here?"

"Ah, yes, that very thing happened... After the incident on that plane, they brought us here. Those people in white told me that you should recover, and then at night, Jemky and company, the rest of those apes and also those tamers arrived; it was a terrible massacre!... But we gave those monstrous tamers their comeuppance... By the way, do you know what happened to all of them?"

"Well... The apes and those four are in this place recovering too, in fact. Even though you may not believe it... Jemky and those three others were the ones who created one of those healing mixtures and let me use it with you to wake you up."

"What?!" Dixie exclaimed, suddenly confused. "W-what are you saying? Did they... help you?"

"Yes, really. They told me themselves and gave me some of that kind of blue healing mixture."

"And since when... are those four so *'kind'*?" Dixie asked again, very surprised. "How's that?"

"I don't know, I didn't even want to believe that they would help us... But I see they did, after all," Diddy added, shrugging and giving a short smile, before getting serious again. "By the way, about the tamers, I've heard that they also are in recovery elsewhere... And according to those four fools, they have been very hurt."

"I'm quite sure," Dixie replied with a shrug. "The beating we gave them was quite considerable. Besides... the last thing I remember was giving that darn one-eyed man the well-deserved punishment of his life"

"I know, they also told me that... And is it true that the apes and those four bullies allied with you to defeat them?"

"Yes... and the truth, I didn't expect it from them. I swear I found it difficult to survive in that situation having all the evil groups together and willing to attack us... But... we survived," Dixie added with a slight smile, which caused Diddy to do the same. But then, Dixie became serious again and even a little fearful. "Uhh, by the way, Diddy... W-we have to get out of here! Since you and I are safe-"

"Uhh, b-but wait, Dixie!" Diddy interrupted, calming her down. "It's that... I don't know what place this is, I have no idea where we are, I don't even know if maybe we are... further away from DK Island."

Dixie also went silent for a few seconds as she processed the reality they were having... *They both didn't know where they were now*; it was clear that they were in some kind of *veterinary clinic*, but they didn't know how far from Hurricane Island or DK they were now.

"Isn't this the same city as the zoo?" Diddy asked with uncertainty.

"No... I don't think so," Dixie replied in kind. "When that plane crashed, I could see the city and it was not the same as the other. Unless we're on the other side of that city."

"And then what?" Diddy asked with the same expression before there was another moment of silence, as they thought with their eyes lowered what they could do now. Suddenly, Diddy also remembered *another* important detail that would worry them. "And by the way... and w-what happened to Mr. Pinky, the animals and all those children?"

Dixie looked up at Diddy again quickly as she remembered *the entire herd* coming with them... The last thing they remembered about them is being in that ship, which had been submerged by the wild storm that had... And now they had no idea what the fate of all of them would have been.

"Oh, no, no, no!" Dixie exclaimed as she thought about the worst about the herd's whereabouts. "What if... something terrible happened to all of them?"

"Uhh, or maybe they did make it to dry land..." Diddy said, trying to think of something positive, but it didn't work out. "Oh... or maybe... Uh, well, but I think we could still find out if we get out of here... But how? We don't even know where we are. And I don't think those people in white can understand us."

"So, we would have to escape from this place," Dixie added seriously. "And by the way... how are those apes and those four bullies? I mean, do you know if they're too injured or have already recovered their strength to try to do something?"

"I haven't seen the apes; I heard they're locked in another room. Jemky and the others were also in this room, but I don't know where they are now; they're almost fine... Although I don't think we should worry so much about them now; the people here seem to be good at keeping them under contr-"

Suddenly, the door of the room opened, and five of the doctors entered, who carried some cages, where inside these, were the kids from Jemky's quartet pushing the bars wildly and screaming as if they were hysterical. The curious thing about the scene is that both the quartet and the people had certain multicolored paint stains on their clothes and bodies, as if they had had some kind of game or mini war.

"Quick, we have to calm them down!" one of the people exclaimed.

Then, the doctors placed the cages on some countertops and took some syringes from their pockets. Another person pulled out what appeared to be a small vial and inserted the needle of the syringe into it.

"Stay still!" one of the people ordered the four of them, taking Jemky's arm through the bars. "This will only hurt you a little."

Then, the person began injecting into Jemky's arm, which made him scream in pain and squeal as the primate he was. Before long, the other people did the same to the other three kong children, which also made them scream in a deafening way. A few seconds later... the four of them seemed to be calming down until they were exhausted.

"Alright, we can get them out now," one of the people said, opening one of the cages.

The people took the quartet out of their cages and took them back to their respective stretchers, then cleaned them of the paint stains they had. The four of them were now calm and didn't show so much resistance towards the doctors; even their faces looked quite relaxed.

"Wow, these little ones need urgent intensive rehabilitation," one of the doctors commented. "They have enough indications of violent behavior and it'll be worse if they're not treated in time."

"They must have led a difficult life," another one added, beginning to examine them, "even the spider monkey and the chimpanzee, although the two of them show no signs of aggression, unless they feel threatened."

"It's not even normal how they got here; young primates should be in the jungles... and with their family or someone who takes care of them... It's even abnormal for primates of different species to be together; that sounds like they haven't all been in their natural habitat."

People continued to examine the quartet, while they were now submissive to their treatment.

"I told you it was a bad idea to attack these people, Mandrew," Rocky said with a listless look.

"But what else did you want us to do? I didn't want to play that stupid game," Mandrew replied in kind. Suddenly, he began to smile in a relaxed manner. "Hey... I think that injection is making me feel... *so good*. Don't you feel it?"

"Wait, that's right," Jemky replied, starting to smile in kind. "It feels like... sweets with millipede venom. I missed feeling this way."

"Hey, look, Dixie is here now," Melenky said, smiling that way, too. "She did survive after all."

"Hi, Dixie," Rocky said, waving and keeping his smile, to which Dixie waved back with a look of strangeness.

"But what?!" one of the doctors, who was examining Mandrew and checking his wound that he almost didn't have, suddenly exclaimed. "You have to see this! How are the other three little ones?"

Suddenly, the doctor removed the bandage that Mandrew had and, to the surprise of those people, there was barely a scratch in the area where Mandrew had been hit by the projectile. The people were absolutely astonished to see this event that seemed too unusual to them.

"But how could... this be possible?" the doctor exclaimed, looking in confusion at the others and also at the quartet. "B-but these little ones had their wounds still serious."

"The orangutan is like that too!" another of the doctors, who was checking Jemky's wound, exclaimed.

"And this little one too!" another person, who was with Melenky, added.

Then, one of those doctors quickly walked up to Diddy and removed his bandage as well... just to realize that he also didn't have the same severity in his wound as he had the day before.

"But... how?!" the doctors exclaimed, being perplexed by this surprising event.

The group of doctors just kept looking and examining the little kongs in amazement again and again, while at the same time being puzzled after seeing that the herd was in good condition in an unusually record time. Meanwhile, Diddy, Dixie and the quartet only shrugged their shoulders at already knowing the *reason* for their *speedy* recovery.

"I don't understand," one of the doctors said. "First, the chimpanzee narrowly avoids dying from overdose, and now all the other primates recover from severe injuries overnight... This is very strange!"

"This can only be summed up as a mysterious miracle, there's no other explanation," another doctor added, looking at them all pensively. "Although maybe there is *something strange* here; we should find out... In fact, do you remember that the initial medical examinations they underwent indicated that they had several internal injuries still not healed?"

"But that's too strange," another of them added in the same way.

"But the good thing is that they're all well," another one added, smiling. "Perhaps we should conduct further examinations to check for any anomalies in them, taking into account the initial examinations they underwent."

"So, if these little ones already look more stable, could we start once and for all with therapeutic activities in them, right?"

"Absolutely. And we should start soon; the four restless little ones are calm for the moment, so they'll grasp things better... Okay, so let's get started."

The doctors began to mobilize and order some objects. They even went out and re-entered the room as if they were preparing something. Meanwhile, the two primate groups just observed everything and thought.

"And now what are they going to do to us?" Dixie asked quietly, next to Diddy.

"I have no idea, but it must not be bad," Diddy replied without taking his eyes off what the doctors were doing. "If they take us elsewhere from here, maybe we can escape. Although... I have no idea where we would go."

"If only people could understand us," Dixie said with a sigh. "And if they know Hurricane Island too, they could take us there or at least tell us how to get there."

"Although... there would be a little problem," Diddy added uncertainly. "If those people then take us elsewhere... will they also take the apes and those four bullies with us?"

"Oh, no, then we would have to escape. Whatever, except having to keep seeing all those psychopathic apes. We must find a way to get away from all those bad apes forever; if they accompany us wherever we go, we won't do anything well; they could even do some evil to us now."

"I don't think so now; at least none of them carry weapons anymore and are weak enough to fight; even the people seem like they would control them well in case of any attempted attack. And I don't think they put us together with the large apes, which are the most dangerous."

"Come here, little ones," one of the doctors suddenly said, approaching Diddy and Dixie to take each of them in their arms.

Then, the doctors also carried Jemky's quartet in their arms, and began to move them all out of that room. The quartet were pretty calm, while Diddy and Dixie were just thinking about how they would get out of there...

Chapter End Notes

It hurt me to write the previous chapters, I even felt bad :'c But now... the conflicts are finally over :) Although this does not end here yet.

The next chapters are already about resolutions, and they will be calm... at least for Diddy and Dixie.

Chapter 84: Hard Evidence

Chapter Notes

Extensive chapter.

The people got back to that jungle-like open-air site, the same one where they had taken the little kongs the day before. Dixie hadn't seen that place yet, but being there, she also felt like she was on one of the islands, like for a moment she could feel at home even though she wasn't. Diddy, on the other hand, and having recovered his spirits this time, watched the site with greater attention too.

The doctors left all the little kongs in a corner among the trees, where there were wooden objects with white squares that appeared to be easels. The only detail in particular... was that four of those easels already had traces of paint with stains that seemed to have been made by the quartet, due to the crudeness with which they were painted.

"Ah, here again," Jemky said with some disgust but calmly, as people placed each one in front of the easels.

On the other hand, Diddy and Dixie were also placed next to the quartet and in front of easels for each of the two. Then, they also placed some containers of what appeared to be paint, in addition to brushes for each of the little kongs. Diddy and Dixie just took each one and looked strangely at the people, while the kids from the quartet had to be offered to take the brushes, in turn they took them reluctantly.

"Bah! Isn't there anything better to do here?" Mandrew said, dipping his brush into the paint container before roughly pressing it against the canvas and making some crude strokes.

The other three kids in the quartet proceeded to do the same thing with the same crudeness, until one of the people began to intervene.

"No, no, no, that's not how," the person said, taking Mandrew's arm. "You just have to do it this way."

The people took each of the children by the hand and corrected their posture to paint. Then, two other people also instructed Diddy and Dixie, who had no idea why they were being made to paint out of nowhere.

"Now do it yourselves," one of the people said, letting go of Melenky's hand.

The six little kongs proceeded to move their brushes as instructed, and now they seemed to have caught up with them. This time, the kids from Jemky's quartet, even though they still had reluctant looks, seemed as if doing that activity had captured their attention with greater interest. Meanwhile, Diddy and Dixie continued to stroke with their brushes too; they, on the other hand, looked quite calm.

"Hey... this is not bad," Melenky said with a small smile suddenly, before looking at the other paint cans. "I want another color!" he added before dipping his brush into another paint can and starting to make other strokes on the canvas.

"Wow, I think that's right," Jemky added, beginning to smile in the same way and making other brushstrokes in a calmer way.

"This is like what we used to do at the orphanage when we were little," Rocky said with the same expression.

"Which orphanage? Don't mention that dreadful place," Mandrew exclaimed with some disgust. "We could barely paint for ten minutes and were punished if we didn't do it well."

"I bet you can't do this!" Melenky exclaimed defiantly, making some more 'elaborate' scribbles.

"You don't even know how to paint; it's done like this!" Jemky replied, doing the same.

The quartet began to compete with each other to see who would do some scribbles faster or more interesting, although none made sense. The curious thing about it... was that the four children appeared calm this time, despite their rough attitudes; it was as if for the first time they were having fun in a relaxed manner.

On their part, Diddy and Dixie continued with their own thing and, to tell the truth, they found that activity quite relaxing. Even so, uncertainty invaded them again minutes later; no matter how good what they were doing felt, they had as a priority the idea of getting out of that place as soon as possible. At the same time, they had to think about what they could do to get rid of all the bad apes, not necessarily by exterminating them all, but to find a way to *never* have to see them *again*; after all the events that occurred, it was too likely that the apes would exact revenge on the two of them... and that could even represent a danger when they return to DK Island.

"Hey, Dixie," Diddy whispered, trying not to be heard by the quartet, as he looked around the jungle-like site where they were.

"Yeah?"

"What if we go looking around here if there is a way out or something?" he proposed, making sure that there are no people around.

"Right now?" Dixie questioned with a doubtful look. "I mean, are you already well enough to be able to leave from this very moment?"

"Of course, I don't even have the wound anymore; there's just a scar that will soon disappear. I also don't think we still need the medicines that those people give us."

"Okay, but... will there be a way out here?"

"There are too many tall trees, let's climb one and see what else is out there," he said, taking her arm. "Come, quick."

Dixie decided to go along with Diddy, and both left the activity to go and inspect the wooded area. Shortly after they left, the quartet turned to look at them strangely.

"Hey, and where are you going?" Jemky asked them along with the group.

"Around there," Diddy replied with a shrug and without giving them so much importance.

Both continued on their way and began to walk the site full of trees. The place was not so big, but anyway, the atmosphere gave them a certain feeling of being in the jungle. There was no exit route on the ground, so they decided to start climbing trees.

"Look over there, Dixie!" Diddy exclaimed, pointing in a direction where they could see a lot of outside lighting.

Diddy and Dixie began to head towards that source of illumination until they got closer. When they arrived, they climbed a little higher up the branches that were nearby until they reached almost the top of one of those trees. The view they now had left them speechless: what they saw were other places similar to the one they were, although they had notable differences. These sites were separated by high walls and also had an atmosphere that was quite close to nature. In the distance, they saw other animals next to more people who seemed to be accompanying them, or rather caring for them.

"Is this... another zoo?" Diddy wondered, looking strangely at the whole place.

"I don't think so," Dixie said likewise. "Those animals don't seem to be bored or suffering... Those people even seem to be treating them well. It's like us here."

"I thought this would be a normal hospital," Diddy said before looking at all those sights. "Well, and it seems that here there is no way out that can be useful to us."

Around the whole set of 'natural' sites Diddy and Dixie could see distant and abundant buildings, which only increased the uncertainty in them; that whole scenario gave them no sign that they could get out of there easily.

"Oh, no, now what?" Dixie asked in frustration. "How are we supposed to get out of here?"

"I guess we'll have to wait for those people to see what they'll do with us, I mean, they said we should be in the jungle, right? If they take us to one, maybe from there we can see how to look for Hurricane Island or DK Island."

"Oh, no, I don't think we should wait for those people," Dixie reaffirmed with a fearful look. "I mean... they can't take us along with those evil apes!"

"Oh, that's true," Diddy replied in frustration. "Ugh, dang! I don't know when we'll get out of all this... Even continuing to see those four fools when we go back to school is going to be a danger to us; I mean... the large apes now know that they were our classmates. Now they know where we live and how they might find us!"

"And that's not the worst thing," Dixie added in the same tone of uncertainty, "it wouldn't only pose a danger to us, but also... to our family and our friends on DK Island; those apes don't forgive anything, seriously, *nothing*."

Both of them were thinking and looking at each other with enormous uncertainty for long seconds. Even if the important thing is that the two were already safe and sound, their worry had not gone away; and although the group of bad apes had been defeated, they did not stop fearing for what could happen as soon as all of them were released. Even the idea of returning to DK Island was already beginning to raise more concerns about the safety of themselves and their loved ones there.

"Oh, but... we don't even know where exactly we are now," Diddy said, looking down, still in frustration. "But we must not allow the people to take us to any of those thugs as well. There must be a wa- Wait! what is..."

"What?" Dixie asked in confusion.

Suddenly, Diddy had reached to see down certain movements in the bushes there... accompanied by silhouettes that seemed to move those bushes.

"Hey, are those..."

Diddy and Dixie looked at each other curiously, and then hurried down from the trees as fast as they could. Those moving silhouettes had features known to both of them and, even if they had seen them before, it was a good time to be able to reach them up close.

Seconds later, Diddy and Dixie reached those bushes and began searching them for the identified figures. To their surprise, those *four silhouettes* were frightened as soon as they noticed the presence of both.

"It's the Jennies!" Dixie exclaimed, smiling a little at the quartet of kong children. "So, they were hidden here."

"Did they also come when we were brought here?" Diddy asked in confusion.

"Yes, those people wanted to examine them too, but they escaped and couldn't find them."

Suddenly, Diddy and Dixie felt a sudden embrace, which belonged to none but those children; they were no longer frightened, but rather happy to see their 'friends', and did not even hide again.

"Oh, okay, okay, calm down," Dixie told the quartet with a small smile and calming them down. "Good thing you all are well, or rather... good thing you haven't been lost."

"They were hiding here the whole time," Diddy said. "At least that's what I saw while you were asleep, Dixie. Even those people mentioned them quite a bit."

"I know, they hid as soon as people started examining them," Dixie added, before looking worriedly at the four children as they continued to smile innocently. "Oh, and now what are we supposed to do with them? We're going to have to take them with us, but what will those people say if they see them?"

"It's true, I don't even know how those people will react if they find out what these four children really are."

"They surely will want to keep them to do investigations; it's most likely. But even so, we must take them to Hurricane Island with their respective relatives... even if it'll be quite hard for them to see them like that."

"Although among all this, it would have been worse if they were still in the hands of those tamers," Diddy added with concern... before changing his expression and opening his eyes to the fullest when a *curious idea* came to his mind. "Wait, Dixie!"

"Huh? What's wrong?" Dixie asked, looking at him strangely when she saw his sudden change in expression.

Suddenly, Diddy was pensive for a few seconds, while he looked back at Jenny's quartet carefully, receiving an innocent smile from them.

"I think we will have to give these four ape kids to those people," Diddy said seriously.

"What are you saying?!" Dixie exclaimed, looking at him more strangely. "How are we going to do that? We can't!"

"Let me explain," Diddy reaffirmed. "Jemky and those others said something about tamers... Something about the fact that they were being investigated and that they needed some evidence to send them to prison all at once, after they recover; and maybe... the Jennies could be *that proof*."

"What are you talking about? And what would the Jenny's have to do there?"

"The video recordings!" Diddy exclaimed with a small smile. "I mean, the Jennies record *everything*... and surely they must have *evidence* of almost everything that happened on that secret island... including when those tamers appeared."

"Hey, but... can they still record after we have 'revived' them?" Dixie questioned with a doubtful look. "And were not these tamers already defeated?"

"Regarding those tamers, we don't know how serious they are... What if once recovered they do something bad again? Who knows if they'll later come to pick those evil apes and resume their macabre plans... It can even be worse."

Dixie was also pensive for a while; she hadn't thought about that detail about tamers. Even if everything turned out with an uncertain future, they had to consider how they could be safe once and for all.

"Okay, but... will it be safe to hand over the Jennies just like that? I mean, they'll become very restless."

"We'll explain to them that they must behave and that everything will be for the good," Diddy said earnestly, placing his hands on her shoulders. "Come on, Dixie... Maybe this is our last alternative so that at least we no longer have to see those evil apes and we can be safe when we return home. Those apes are lackeys of the tamers; if we stop them... it could be the definitive end of that *entire* criminal gang."

Dixie fell silent again as she stared at Diddy. She thought of all the things they had had to go through, all the dangers they had been exposed to... and what they might still be exposed to when they tried to return to their island; after all, with Jemky's quartet it was obvious that they would keep in touch at school, and that would not bring anything good now that the adult apes knew of their whereabouts and, likewise, they would expose themselves to danger from the tamers... even posing a serious danger to the rest of the Kong family.

"Diddy, but..." Dixie said before breathing a sigh and looking at the mechanical children; she was still hesitant to hand them over, but after all, it would be an alternative way out. "Okay... Let's do it," she added with a small smile for a couple of seconds.

Diddy made the same gesture and nodded, before turning his gaze to Jenny's quartet, who were still smiling at them like innocent children.

"Well... then let's go," Diddy said firmly, before suddenly changing his expression. "Uhh, wait... but how will we hand them over?"

"We'll take them to those people, won't we?" Dixie said with a shrug.

"Yes, but I mean... How are we going to explain all this to those people? We can't talk to them."

"We would have to show them the internal mechanism of the Jennies. Why don't we ask those other four?" she added, pointing to the quartet of bully children from a distance.

"You're right. I think they even must have more information about all this. Let's go!"

Diddy and Dixie headed back to Jemky's quartet, who were still scribbling on their respective canvases. The four of them looked quite calm, as if for the first time they were seen taking a moment of relaxation. Then, Diddy and Dixie hurried to call them.

"Hey!" Diddy called them along with Dixie.

The quartet turned to look at them immediately, although with some strangeness.

"Yeah, the four of you," Diddy reaffirmed, earning a deeper look of strangeness from them. "It's that we n-need your help."

"Uh, yeah?... What do you want?" Rocky asked them, holding his expression while looking at them.

"It's that you had mentioned something about those tamers," Diddy replied, still taking courage to speak to them. "Y-you said something about people needing some evidence to send them to prison, how was that?"

The quartet looked at each other and then looked at both still in doubt.

"Well... *that*," Rocky replied with a shrug. "That they want to send those crazy tamers to prison because there are suspicions of animal trafficking. But, of course, they need some evidence; otherwise, it's likely that they'll only continue to be kept in recovery at another hospital... Something like that was what we heard from those doctors who examine us."

"And what does this question have to do with you needing our help?" Jemky asked them with the same look.

"It's that I think..." Diddy said before whispering, "that we know what kind of *evidence* we can present."

"Huh? What are you talking about?" Mandrew asked them.

"The Jennies!" Diddy replied firmly. "We can show the video recordings from the Jennies. You see, those mechanical kids have tape recorders all the time, right?... Well, we wanted to ask you how to extract those recordings from them; maybe then we can get the people to do something about it against those tamers. The Jennies must surely have recordings from when those tamers appeared there in that hidden building, or when they were going to put us on that plane."

"Wait, wait, wait!" Rocky interrupted, shaking his head from side to side. "Firstly, those Jennies are savages, and secondly, how do you think people who speak another language are going to listen to

small primates like us?"

"Please! Tell us," Diddy pleaded, clasping his hands. "It's the only thing we can do to prevent those tamers from returning."

"What's gotten into you?" Mandrew told them, still looking at them strangely. "You went crazy; that would be in vain."

"And where are the Jennies, by the way?" Jemky asked, crossing his arms and with the same look.

"They're hiding over there," Dixie pointed to the trees where Jenny's quartet were, and began to head towards them. "I'll bring them right now."

Diddy joined in the look for Jenny's quartet, and went to find them as well. Meanwhile, the children from Jemky's quartet kept looking at each other strangely, while also seeing Diddy and Dixie in the distance. Seconds later, the four shrugged and continued painting on their respective canvases, until another seconds later, they were interrupted by Diddy and Dixie again.

"Here they are!" Dixie exclaimed, causing the quartet to turn to see them again.

Diddy and Dixie had the mechanical children by their arms, who were a little surprised by the situation... and, apparently, with a stern look towards the other quartet.

"Now, tell us how to extract those cassettes from them," Diddy told the bully children.

"Hey, is it serious?" Jemky exclaimed, hands at his sides. "Do you really think that's going to work?"

"We haven't said it'll work, but we could try," Diddy replied, leading Ricky and Melvyn to them.

"They do record even after having revived them, right?" Dixie asked as she held Jenny and Mandy down.

"We don't know exactly, but they had new videocassettes inside them; maybe they did," Rocky replied as they continued to look strangely at Diddy and Dixie. After a few seconds, he headed in Ricky's direction, shrugging at the same time. "Oh, well, let me make the attempt if that's what you want so much."

Rocky proceeded to approach Ricky and grabbed his ear as if he were looking for the button that opened his head. But as soon as he did, Ricky made a gesture of disgust towards Rocky and gave him a single slap.

"*Hey!*" Rocky exclaimed, rubbing his face from the blow, before Ricky repeated the movement.

"Ricky, no!" Diddy stopped him, holding his arms. "This is not the time to fight."

"Well, let's try with another one," Jemky said as he headed to do the same with Jenny, but as soon as he touched her ear, she slapped him and pulled his locks. "*Ugh, Jenny!*"

"Jenny!" Dixie exclaimed, stopping her.

Suddenly, Jenny's quartet became aggressive towards the other quartet, so Diddy and Dixie had to control them again.

"No, stay still, please!" Dixie demanded. "We just need you to stand still; we're not fighting now!"

After a while of trying to calm them down, Diddy and Dixie managed to calm the four of them, even if they kept their glares at the other quartet.

"I told you these Jennies are savages," Rocky said with a shrug.

"Oh, because it was you who taught them to be like that," Diddy reproached. "Anyway, I think they've calmed down."

After the quartet rolled their eyes at that response, Rocky headed more cautiously towards Ricky and pressed his ear again, this time, while Diddy held him tighter, as Ricky continued to show himself wanting to attack Rocky. On her part, Dixie also tried to keep the other three kids calm."

"Look, just hold down the button on their left ears," Rocky told them before rummaging through Ricky's abdomen. "Then, press their abdomen where they have another button."

Instantly, under Ricky's t-shirt a slight bump appeared and, when they observed him better after lifting his t-shirt, there was an opening where part of the internal mechanism could be seen, accompanied by a box that seemed to contain some tapes that were rolling around some coils.

"If you want to get the video recordings, you have to get those tapes out," Rocky said before inserting his hand to manipulate that mechanism. "To do this you must first stop the recording by pressing this butto-"

"Hey, it's people!" Melenky exclaimed suddenly, catching everyone's attention.

All the kongs turned to look at where Melenky pointed and, as if by surprise, the medical people were a few meters away from them. As expected, those people made a gesture of enormous astonishment upon seeing the ten little kongs gathered together and in that situation.

"But what's going on here?!" one of those people exclaimed, gaping.

"Look, it's the lost little chimpanzees!" another of the people said.

Immediately, the mechanical children began to be tense in the presence of the people, which Diddy and Dixie noticed and tried to calm them down.

"Don't be scared, those people are good ones," Dixie whispered as she held Jenny and Mandy by the arms, while Diddy did the same with Ricky and Melvyn.

"Hey, what is it that the chimpanzee in there has in his abdomen?!" one of the people pointed to Ricky, as they headed towards the quartet.

"That thing doesn't seem to be good at all!" another of the people added.

The mechanical kong children became more tense and as if they wanted to run away after the people were closer to them.

"No, don't worry, they won't hurt you!" Diddy exclaimed, holding them. "They just want to meet you! Trust us!"

In the face of so much tension, Dixie rushed to press the button on Jenny's left ear to open her head... scaring away the group of people in one fell, who walked away instantly and were all speechless upon seeing the shape of the quartet of those kong children.

"*Holy heavens! What is that?!*" the people exclaimed as if they had seen a ghost.

"Those are not chimpanzees!" another person added in horror. "I don't know what they are, but they're not chimpanzees!"

The mechanical kongs were still tense while Dixie closed Jenny's head again, though this time, they seemed to have calmed down a bit.

"*Listen to us,*" Dixie whispered to the mechanical quartet. "Those people *are not* evil ones; they just try to help us apparently, and they need to know about you so that they can arrest *other people who are evil* and who hurt you and left you as you are, so please, we need you to stay calm and trust us, okay?"

While Dixie was telling them that, the people were also muttering among them, keeping the Jenny's quartet in their sights.

"Well, we'll approach carefully..." one of the people said, looking at them sideways.

The children from Jenny's quartet were still uncomfortable, but both Diddy and Dixie, even those in the other quartet, tried to keep them still.

"Let's see," one of the people said, approaching the quartet again and trying to touch one of them. "Come, little ones... Good little ones," they said in an affectionate tone.

The other people were also slowly approaching the quartet while talking to them in a sweet way, as if they were talking to a pet.

"Alright, what cute little chimpanzees," one of the people said as caressing Mandy's head sweetly.

After a few seconds, the mechanical kongs began to be calmer, in turn they looked at Diddy and Dixie, and both smiled at them to give them greater security. Later, Diddy and Dixie were able to let go of the four of them upon seeing them a little more confident. Then, intending to show people, Diddy pressed the button that opened Melvyn's head, shocking the people at first, albeit milder this time.

"Heavens! But what do we have here?!" one of the people exclaimed before trying to approach Melvyn.

The people approached to take a close look at the inside of Melvyn's head; everyone had a clear expression of seeing something otherworldly.

"These chimpanzees are... *mechanicals*?" one of the people asked. "Are they... robots or something like that?"

"I don't know, but they're definitely not flesh-and-blood chimpanzees," another one commented.

Then, Dixie did the same procedure with Mandy in opening her abdomen to let them see that she had another part of the mechanism there, and where they would probably get those *video recordings* that they needed so much.

"Oh, no, no, no, this must have an explanation," one of the people said. "I was already questioning how it is that these little chimpanzees looked so strange and so healthy after that plane crash. This that they have here... Are these recording tapes?"

"And wait a minute," another of the people said, examining inside Melvyn's head. "It's that... I also don't think these chimpanzees are entirely mechanical; take a good look at this species of... wires! Look at the walls inside his head!"

The people continued to examine Jenny's quartet and, with the help of Diddy and Dixie, who showed them the internal mechanism of each one, they were able to see the real shape of those four little chimpanzees. Later, one of the people stood up again and spoke to the others.

"This will need to be investigated; it's a novelty in the case," the person said, catching the attention of the others. "The investigating agents will need them; we have to show them this."

The others nodded and stood up as well, while Diddy and Dixie smiled at Jenny's quartet as a congratulatory sign for behaving well. Later, the people approached the four of them again.

"Well, come here," one of the people said, trying to hold Melvyn in his arms.

Although the quartet was nervous at first, Diddy and Dixie gave them smiles and small pats on the arm as a gesture of security. The people took the four in their arms while cradling them as if they were little children.

After that, the people turned around and carried the mechanical children in their arms. Diddy and Dixie decided to follow in their footsteps to accompany their four 'friends', until the people stopped them.

"Oh, no, no, you have to stay here," one of the people told them. "It's your hour of recreation."

Dixie pointed at the mechanical kongs while emitting primate sounds to people as a signal of communication.

"No, don't worry about them," one of the people added. "Uh, are these little ones your friends?" they asked, getting a nod from Diddy and Dixie. "Oh, rest assured, we promise you that they'll be as fine as possible; we'll only have to conduct some examinations on them, okay? We could even return them here if all goes well."

With that said, the people resumed their way and carried the quartet in their arms. On their part, Diddy and Dixie watched as the people walked away; both hoped that such a plan would work well for them in the situation.

Diddy placed a hand on Dixie's shoulder while giving her a slight smile, before she did the same to him.

"Hey, look at that!" Melenky exclaimed suddenly. "Is that..."

Diddy and Dixie turned and went to look at what the quartet was pointing to, seeing them looking at a specific point on the ground. Upon arriving at the indicated corner, Melenky grabbed an object from the ground, which appeared to have a greenish and bright color.

"It looks like that emerald," Mandrew commented, meeting with the group. "It's the same one, right?"

"Yes, it is!" Melenky added. "Although... it seems to be cut."

"Well, because those two monkeys cut it to 'revive' the Jennies," Jemky said, taking the emerald.

Suddenly, Dixie took the emerald by surprise, almost snatching it, but Jemky stopped her and refused to give it to her at first. Dixie glared at the quartet as they looked oddly at her and Diddy. But then, Jemky looked at the emerald again and then at Dixie.

"Oh... This is yours, isn't it?" Jemky asked, raising his brow. A few seconds later, he shrugged and held out the emerald to Dixie.

Dixie took that shiny stone in one fell swoop, in turn looking at the four of them with some disgust. Then, she stared at it along with Diddy; it had a small fraction because of the method they had done to try to bring the quartet of mechanical children back to life.

"And to think that everything started because of that stone," Rocky said with a shrug, catching Diddy and Dixie's attention again. "We didn't even know what our dads wanted it for; we had always thought they wanted it for collecting it or retrieving it or something like that."

Diddy and Dixie stood silently looking at them while they were thinking about the same thing and everything that had happened.

"We didn't know it was yours, Dixie," Jemky said in a calm tone. "You had even told me that it was Diddy's, that he had bought it for himself; I didn't know your mom had given it to you. What a coincidence that our dads were looking for one like it."

Suddenly, Dixie looked at them again with much more strangeness, especially at Jemky, since she remembered *a specific* detail that, although it was no longer so important, she had lacked to resolve at the time.

"By the way... and how did you know that detail about my mom giving it to me?" Dixie asked, looking at him seriously.

"Ah, you told me about it yourself," Jemky replied, shrugging and earning a hardened look from Dixie, before he continued. "I mean, you told Mandrew and me when we were *Jenny and Mandy*, in one of our conversations when we were your 'friends' on Hurricane Island."

"That was when you told us how you gave that emerald to Diddy," Mandrew added. "You said that your mother had told you to give it to someone special, and that you wanted to make Diddy understand that he was that special someone so that he would confess his feelings for you."

Dixie looked at them again strangely at the same time that she felt some embarrassment when she remembered that, indeed, she had told that detail to 'Jenny' and 'Mandy', in one of her many personal conversations with those she believed were her friends.

"You should have just told Diddy you liked him and that's it," Jemky told her with a shrug and a little mocking laugh. "You even knew Diddy liked you."

As expected, Dixie looked annoyingly at Jemky at the tasteless comment, even if she knew it was true.

"But hey, don't feel remorse either," Rocky said with the same expression. "Anyway, we had been planning to steal that emerald from you, since we saw it in Diddy's pyramid."

"Yes, that's why we stole our dads' guns last time," Jemky added. "We were thinking about robbing you two on the last days of school. In fact, we wanted to try it first the easy way: exchanging that stone for several of ours, so we wouldn't get into trouble. I said that to Dixie, but she didn't want to."

"So, then we started opting for the hard way," Mandrew added. "We were thinking of doing it on the last day of school to rob you and take that emerald from you."

"But I kept trying the easy way with Dixie," Jemky continued. "We saw that she was upset with Diddy, so I saw that was the perfect time to make her give me that emerald in exchange for helping her with Diddy, making him jealous of me so that he'll confess to her... Although that didn't work with the monkey," he finished with a forced smile.

Both Diddy and Dixie kept looking at the quartet reluctantly at the blatant comments from them.

"Oh, little monkeys," Jemky exclaimed, shaking his head from side to side with a slight mocking laugh. "I still don't understand why you two could not just be more direct in saying you liked each other and that's it."

"Well, but stop emphasizing it!" Diddy replied defensively.

"Hey, hey, calm down, we're not going to fight right now," Jemky replied, still with a mocking smile. "Oh, well, but that's how the first loves of those who are cowards are: they're stupid and childish."

The quartet looked as wanting to let out laughter of mockery towards Diddy and Dixie, which ended up annoying both. The two wanted to give them their comeuppance, especially to Jemky, but they also felt that the environment was not quite suitable for fights, so they just turned around and walked away from the group.

"Hey, anyway, where were we staying?" Mandrew asked, looking back at the canvases of paint.

"Well, I was painting that picture prettier than you," Jemky said, heading towards them.

"Prettier? That's done with pure meaningless scribbles," Melenky replied.

The four children simply continued their activity. Meanwhile, Diddy and Dixie had gone to another corner, away from the quartet so as not to have so much close contact with them. They still had to think about how to get out of that place, but there were also no reliable alternatives that could get them out of there; perhaps they should wait a little longer for news about the fate of the tamers to at least be safe.

A couple of minutes later, Diddy and Dixie went to sit under the trees in that area; after all, both of them also wanted to take a break even if it was only for a moment. There was almost no noise near that corner, and even the quartet was away from both, so the atmosphere was perfect for taking a break.

"We just have to wait what they say about the Jennies," Diddy said earnestly. "If all goes well, we'll run away from here with them... and we'll try to find a way to go in search of Hurricane Island."

"All we need is to know that all those apes and their four kids will no longer be allowed to go elsewhere," Dixie added. "Just that, and we'll be fine when we return to DK Island... Because I don't see it advisable to defeat them here on our own in the presence of those people."

"There are still two weeks left until those hurricanes supposedly end. At least we did tell everyone on DK island in those letters that we would be going in three weeks... Well, I hope they did get them."

"Who would say... In less than a week all this happened. I just hope that nothing bad will happen to us when we return."

There was a moment of silence as they both kept sitting and staring down at the ground. Then, Dixie looked again at the emerald, which she was carrying in her hand, and stared at it for a minute. She remembered the time she had given it to Diddy, she remembered how that simple and innocent detail had caused all the journey they had had since then; she remembered how her insecurity in confessing her feelings to Diddy had not made her act in the best way. Suddenly, leaving that context, Dixie came to mind a strange event that had happened to her not long ago, *while she was sleeping*.

"Hey, Diddy..." she said, breaking the moment of silence.

"Yeah?"

"I just remembered... something I saw..." she replied, catching more the attention of Diddy, who turned to look at her curiously. "Something I saw while I was asleep, I think before I woke up recently. It's that... I think I've seen... my parents and my aunt and uncle."

"What are you saying?" Diddy asked with a look of strangeness. "Seriously?"

"Yeah, it was them, and *I even spoke to them*," Dixie said, creating some confusion in Diddy. "Well... I know, but at least it seemed like they were in my dreams..."

"Really? And... what happened there?"

"It was very strange at first. I was talking to them normally as if nothing had happened... until they said I should go with them, and that's when I reacted and wanted to give up going."

"Well... It may make sense, I mean, the people had said that you were about to... you know... sleep forever."

"Yes, that's exactly what was going on... And you know? I think I remember them telling me... that everyone on DK Island was fine and waiting for us... At least that's what I think they told me. They even told me they received our letters!"

Diddy continued to look at her with a small expression of astonishment; he still did not know if that had been true or not, or if maybe it was Dixie's mind that had sent her some kind of vision due the unconscious state she was in.

"Wait, Dixie... Are you really serious?"

"Yes, I remember it perfectly. Still, I hope it's true," Dixie continued as she continued to look at the emerald. "I told them that... I missed them so much, that nothing has been easy since they left, much less because of the way it happened. At that moment, on the one hand I even wanted to go with them, but... I could not; I knew I would still have to live... for Tiny, for Kiddy and Chunky, for we who are the only ones who have each other. Even for you, Diddy... I could not leave you alone here. But at least, regardless of whether or not it was real... I feel like I was finally able to *say goodbye to them*... as it should have been if that was their fate. It was nice... to be able to see them one more time, and know that at least they'll be fine in that other, better world..."

Dixie continued with her gaze down, at the same time she dropped a couple of tears on the emerald, but she only wiped them. Diddy just stared at her for a few seconds not knowing what to say to her; although he did not like to see her sad when she remembered those episodes, he was always willing to listen to her and accompany her even if he saw her in that mood. Then, he placed a hand on her shoulder, to which Dixie looked at him with her eyes still moistened. Later, Diddy extended his arms so he could hug her for a few minutes. They were both silent for a while longer, as they remained close to each other.

Later, Diddy separated from her while still looking at her. For Dixie, Diddy's company was quite comforting in that situation, if only a little.

"Dixie... you are strong," he said with a brief but comforting smile, while gently caressing her head.

Dixie, with her eyes still a little moist, returned the same smile to Diddy for a couple of seconds, before looking down again. Then, although slowly at first, she rested her head close to Diddy's shoulder, to which he hugged her again for another while, and she reciprocated affectionately. For both Diddy and Dixie, it felt most comforting to be close to each other; they could not deny that they still loved each other, not necessarily romantically, but rather in an emotional way.

Both separated again and just stood silently side by side, leaning on the trunk of the tree.

"What will we do now?" Dixie asked after some minutes.

"I don't know," Diddy replied with a shrug. "I don't want to go painting now, at least not along with those fools."

"You're right," Dixie added, making a reluctant gesture. "Those idiots don't change. Did they really... help you save me?"

"Well, yes; even I was surprised. I didn't even want to believe them at first; they have never had any kind of sensitivity."

They both kept staring into nothingness and continuing their rest while staying together. Suddenly, several thoughts began to pass through Diddy's mind, including... how the whole situation they had had so far had started and, in particular, why it started... There was even an important point that sooner or later he had to clarify with Dixie and, although he knew it would be somewhat uncomfortable, he had to do it.

"Uhh... Hey, Dixie..." he said, catching her attention. "I... It's that I wanted to tell you that... I'm really sorry... for all this that has happened."

Dixie gave Diddy a look of strangeness at those sudden words from him.

"What are you saying? Why?" she asked him.

"Oh, it's that... I know I've said it before, but I can't help but feel guilty... for everything that happened because of my fears in reporting those four fools... for everything I even put you through; that problem was only mine and I involved you even in the consequences... when I never wanted that to happen, Dixie; it was enough with everything you've had to go through before; I never wanted you to encounter that whole situation again: with the tamers and the apes, for example."

"Huh? Hey, but what are you saying?" Dixie exclaimed, looking at him more strangely. "Of course you should not apologize for anything. You have said it yourself: you never wanted all this to happen; you did not do it with the intention of getting us here."

"I know, but... it's true anyway," Diddy reaffirmed. "Just look at us... We don't even know where we are now, and all this could have been avoided *if only I had* acted in time against those fools. And I know that if I had, things wouldn't have gone well either, knowing that they are kids of those criminal apes, but... Oh, I would have done it anyway..." he finished, putting his hands to his temple.

"Diddy..." she said, placing a hand on his shoulder. "I know that neither of us acted in the best way, but we won't get anything looking for a reason for all this; I mean... we can't change anything anymore; we just... had to face things as they came, and we did, and we continue to do so. In addition... I didn't do the right thing either, especially when trying to take a first step with you... We could have made things simpler, and all of this would have been avoided if only... we had known how to communicate things better."

"Actually... reporting things can bring more conflicts than there already are, but... not reporting brings worse consequences," Diddy added in the same way. "I know... And now I understand it all. We weren't experts at communicating things."

Diddy gave Dixie's eyes another look; he didn't know how to tell her another detail that was still pending.

"I guess then... we're not experts at loving either," Diddy said with a low look. "What you and I had was also what got us into trouble, Dixie... We have to admit, it's not the love story we both wanted."

Dixie could not say anything to what Diddy had just mentioned; she didn't know what outcome that story would have either.

"You and I... won't be together anymore, right?" Dixie asked somewhat shyly.

Diddy remained silent and hesitant to answer that somewhat embarrassing question for both of them, knowing that he still loved her too much and at the same time felt that she loved him.

"N-no, Dixie..." Diddy replied, having taken courage to speak. "I mean, not now, not with all this on top. In addition... maybe we're not even so prepared to love each other that way."

Dixie made a slight expression of astonishment at the answer; while she knew it was true, deep down she expected a contrary response from Diddy.

"Uh, no, no, Dixie, I don't want you to take it the wrong way either," he hurriedly said, placing his hands on her shoulders. "I didn't mean-"

"No, Diddy..." Dixie interrupted before sighing and lowering her gaze. "Actually... it's *true*," she added, looking at him again. "I think we were very hasty in taking a step: maybe it's not the time or we're not prepared to love each other like that... We even let our love break easily... and that's what complicated things and brought us here too. And it has even made us have conflicts that we didn't have before when we were just... friends."

"I know... And we have to tell it like it is," he added in the same tone. "Truthfully, I never wanted this to happen like this. And I'm not going to deny you, Dix... I still feel a lot for you, and you don't know how I got excited about our love, but... I think now hasn't been the best time for us."

"Diddy... The truth... I still feel a lot for you too," she replied, looking at him again. "You're a wonderful monkey; you have always been with me. Even with all this, I still see you in the same way and I would even like us to resume things between us. But... I understand; we can't in this situation."

"Maybe it's the best thing for us; I no longer want you and I to be on bad terms again or to enter into conflicts. I want us to be happy, as we were before... even if we just had a friendship."

"Are we going to continue... being good friends, right?"

"Of course, Dix, we always were," he replied, emitting a short but sincere smile at the same time. "Before you've been my girlfriend, you're my best friend, and I don't want us to drift apart while we still want to stay together, even as friends. And maybe... someday we can pick things up in a better way if we want to."

Diddy smiled sweetly at her again, before holding her hands for a while. Dixie, on the other hand, returned the same smile and held his hands as well. Even though that moment was nothing romantic or anything like that, they didn't stop thinking that it was... Both of them could not deny that they still had feelings for each other. But after a few seconds, they returned to reality and to what they had already spoken; they thought about all the journey they had had and how they could have had a wonderful and quiet love story had it not been for everything that happened.

"Can you... give me another hug?" Dixie asked a little shyly.

Diddy smiled at her again, before extending his arms and wrapping them around her sweetly, to which Dixie just reciprocated, resting her head on his shoulder. A few seconds later, the two of them separated even if they didn't want to let go.

"I love you, Diddy. But I also want us to be okay," Dixie added before smiling again.

"So do I, Dix," he replied in kind. "So... everything will be fine between the two of us," he added, smiling at her and receiving the same gesture from her.

The two kongs settled back into the place where they were and continued in their rest. Suddenly, they felt that after that somewhat uncomfortable conversation at first, even if it was not what they expected as an outcome, it had brought them some calm... upon knowing that at least things were fine between the two of them, and it was all they needed in their bond.

"Will we go back to continue painting or what?" Diddy asked after a while. "Or what will we do in the meanwhile?"

"I don't know, I think now I just need some time to think or rest," Dixie replied earnestly. "We still can't risk going out and looking for a way to Hurricane Island or DK."

Diddy shrugged and continued in the same place; he was in the same way too, so he decided to stay with Dixie.

But meanwhile, and perhaps as expected, both had been under the watchful eye of a *certain stormy quartet* for the two of them, unbeknownst to them, although this time it wasn't something that seemed to pose a danger or a headache for both.

"And there are those two lovebirds again," Rocky said with a shrug as they watched Diddy and Dixie.

The quartet was in the middle of some bushes, somewhat away from Diddy and Dixie, but from an angle where they could see them clearly.

"I knew they'd come back in the end," Mandrew added in the same way, having heard nothing of Diddy and Dixie's conversation. "They did turn out to be indestructible after all."

"Even all this hustle couldn't tear them apart," Melenky said as he lay on some branches, before giving Jemky, who was near him, a few little pushes. "Well, we're sorry, Jemky. After all, your Dixie came back with her silly monkey."

"Bah, to heck with those two," Jemky replied with a shrug. "I don't really love Dixie; why lie to you."

"What?" Mandrew exclaimed, turning to look at him with oddity along with the other two at that comment. "Are you the real Jemky?" he added mockingly.

"Oh, I mean, I don't love her the same way as that monkey, that's it," Jemky reaffirmed before looking back at Diddy and Dixie. "I mean, look at them: the way those two love each other is very... I don't know how to describe it. When I had a girlfriend, we didn't love each other so much that way; I just spent a while with them, we said nice and loving things to each other and that was all; we didn't stay together *all the time* or worried so much about each other."

"Maybe the two of them really know how to love each other," Rocky said with a shrug. "Or is it not?" he added, raising his brow.

"That's their call. First of all, I don't even know how that monkey managed to win Dixie over without making an effort."

"Well... There's a simple answer," Melenky said with a shrug. "It must be because Dixie always loved Diddy and that's it; not because he had to make some extra effort to win her love... Isn't it logical?"

"And that doesn't make sense either," Jemky replied. "I mean, how are you going to win someone over without doing anything?"

"Well, it's obvious: it just depends if that someone reciprocates to you or not," Rocky replied with a mocking tone. "Even with my ex-girlfriend it was like that; she showed that she loved me, and that's why I was able to play along with her... Or well, at least I thought she loved me."

"Ah, because you didn't make any more effort for her either," Jemky replied. "You just let her stay with her other boyfriend and didn't take her away from him."

"Don't talk nonsense, I'm not like you," Rocky replied, rolling his eyes. "And what else was I going to do if she didn't love me? Getting into a fight with her other boyfriend or begging her? No way."

"Oh, but what cowards you are too," Jemky told the three. "You don't know how to fight for someone."

"At least we haven't gotten into trouble like you," Melenky replied.

"Yeah, yeah, besides you don't know how to put emotion into things," Jemky replied with a shrug as if nothing.

"What emotion?" Rocky replied. "You took very seriously what that ape who showed us the millipede sweets told us: that having a girlfriend would make you a stronger ape."

"You didn't even listen to him; don't talk about it," Jemky replied.

"Because that ape also exaggerated and talked nonsense to us sometimes," Melenky replied.

"Anyway! I'm getting bored watching that pair of dwarves," Mandrew added, shrugging his shoulders, before getting up. "Are we still painting or what?"

Chapter 85: Recovery

By noon, Jemky's quartet along with Diddy and Dixie had been moved elsewhere. This time, the group of little kongs were in another outdoor corner, sitting on a wooden platform with some small tables, where on top of these were a variety of fruits, mostly bananas. The six children were gathered while tasting the feast that people had prepared for them. To tell the truth, the food they provided was of good quality, so much so that it made them feel that they had not eaten well for days... which was true.

Even so, it was obvious that the quartet would be clustered in a corner, while Diddy and Dixie were a little further away from them. Both groups watched each other eat while throwing some looks of weirdness between moments.

"We'll start with the spider monkey first," one of the people suddenly appeared, catching the attention of the kongs. "Then, the rest of the primates."

The six little kongs looked strangely at first at the group of people who had arrived. But then, they assumed that it was some other test that they were going to do on them, since they were near one of the entrances of the clinic.

"Come here, little boy," one of the people said, taking Diddy in his arms. "Bring the other little ones, please," they said to the other people.

The people were taking and carrying each of the kongs in their arms, and moved them back into the building. Diddy and Dixie remained normal, unlike the quartet, who were still somewhat uncomfortable with the care and treatment of the people, even as if they were afraid of them, but without being able to express it.

Later, they came to a large ward with machines, where they left all the little kongs on individual stretchers. None of them understood what would happen next, but they just saw certain people taking what appeared to be small posters and very colorful and geometric objects that looked like baby toys.

Then, they moved each of the kongs to different corners of the ward, accompanied by a couple of people in each of them. Afterwards, those people began to make signs and even games to each one, using the toys they brought, as if they were interacting with little children, in addition to doing a kind of movement exercises for them. Diddy and Dixie, each on their own, tended to respond positively to the dynamics that were communicated to them, while the quartet only looked at the people strangely, and even showed themselves as if they were intimidated.

"No, no, come here, little boy," one of the people said, holding Melenky after he tried to escape from the stretcher. "Alright, good little monkey," they added, patting him on the head in a sweet way, though that seemed to disgust him, as if it even made him uncomfortable.

On the other hand, another couple of people were trying to hold Jemky, since he had also become restless with the interactions that people made with him. He even tried to hit one of these people, so they had to hold him more tightly until they managed to restrain him.

"There, there, calm down, little one," one of the people said as holding him and put him back on the stretcher, while caressing his head sweetly. "Don't worry, we're just playing. You must cooperate

with us to know how we can treat you, little boy.”

Even if these people spoke affectionately to him and looked harmless, Jemky didn’t change his awkward expression on his face, and even showed himself somewhat frightened. And the same happened with the rest of the quartet, who were also uncomfortable with the treatment of the people, as if they weren’t accustomed to receiving so much affection or didn’t like it at all.

Later, Diddy appeared to have finished the session with the people, and was carried on the same stretcher to another room. The people retreated, leaving him alone for a moment. But a while later, Diddy went to look behind one of the windows that was there, which overlooked the previous ward, mostly to take a look at Dixie and make sure she was okay. Suddenly, he heard one of the doors open.

“... We're going to have to re-educate them; their behavior is impulsive," one of the people said as they walked in with Jemky's stretcher, with him on it. “They look a little nervous too, as if they’re always on the defensive.”

The people transporting Jemky placed his stretcher next to Diddy's, before leaving.

"Have you heard the news about the other four little chimpanzees?" one of the people who had entered commented.

"It can't be, were they really *mechanized* apes?" another person added with a horrified expression. “So, was it true?!”

"Indeed. According to quick tests: their skin, fur and much of their internal organism belong to those of a young chimpanzee of flesh and blood.”

"What a horror, how can someone do that to little creatures? Surely it was those Mr. Owens!"

"That's what is about to be verified. In fact, those magnetic tapes that were found inside them did turn out to have video recordings; the investigators will try to visualize them... That material is worth gold in this case.”

"So... could that *supposed antecedent* that those tamers had have been true?"

"I would think so; I've heard that nearly a decade ago, those gentlemen had been accused of illegal business with wild animals involved, and part of that had to do with some *mechanizations*, I don't know if this is the same matter. But well... I don't know what became of that; I suppose it remained unpunished in the end.”

"Well, it's better that they find out soon; what other atrocities would those men commit?"

"They're going to investigate everything thoroughly. In fact, the projectile that was found in the little spider monkey led to further investigations regarding the aircraft.”

Diddy made a look of surprise at the conversation of the people, who then completely withdrew from that room. He wanted to keep hearing more details and even tried to go after those people to continue listening to them, but they had already closed and secured the door. A few seconds later, Diddy returned to his stretcher to continue looking towards the ward where Dixie and the other three kids of the quartet were still there.

Suddenly, Diddy also noticed that Jemky was almost next to him, to whom he gave a look of weirdness, and he returned the same expression. Then, Diddy continued to look out that window, until he felt Jemky's presence closer, causing him a little scare at first, but then downplayed it.

"Do you know what time they're going to get us out of here?" Jemky asked seriously.

"I don't know," Diddy replied coldly and without looking at him. "I don't even know where we are, don't you know either?"

"We don't even know why all this happened," Jemky added with a shrug, before entering a moment of silence as he looked at Diddy. "So, you're back with Dixie, aren't you, monkey?" he asked him with a brief mocking smile.

Diddy instantly turned to look at him with a reluctant face after that reckless question, before looking back at the window.

"What are you talking about? We haven't gotten back," he replied with a reluctant face.

"How could it not?" Jemky added, nudging him a little. "We have seen you two very close together today, since she woke up."

"Well, obviously we're going to be together in this situation, right?" Diddy replied mockingly. "We're friends."

"But you were very affectionate and hugging each other recently, how come you haven't gotten back together?"

"Wait a minute," Diddy exclaimed, looking at him again, annoyed. "And what were you doing *spying on us*? You didn't even hear well what we were talking about, from what I can see."

"Well, we thought you had gotten back; we were just watching that."

"Oh, you all don't change!" Diddy replied, raising his voice a little, before looking away and rolling his eyes. "And no, we haven't gotten back... We're not going back now," he added in a calmer tone. "We just clarified the situation, that's all."

"What?!" Jemky exclaimed, surprised. "I swore you were back. And how can you not get back?"

"First of all: it's *very shameless of you to* come and ask me that after everything *you did to us*," he replied, annoyed for a moment. "And second: we're just not going back, and that's all."

"Oh, but forget about that; it's not that big of a deal anymore," Jemky replied, giving him a little push as if nothing had happened. "If I hadn't done that to you, surely you two would still be kissing each other in this place."

"You're a truly shameless scoundrel!" Diddy replied, rolling his eyes back at him. "And no, it's not so much because of what you did to us, but because of our beginning. You said it: *we would be in this place anyway*; you already had us under surveillance to catch us. It's just that... Our relationship and wanting to take a step from friends to lovers was what got us into trouble from the start," he added, beginning to speak in a low tone. "And we don't want it to continue like this."

"Are you serious, Diddy?" Jemky exclaimed, looking at him strangely, hands at his sides. "And so much have you said that you love Dixie, and it turns out that you throw everything overboard as if

nothing?"

"Of course I love her," Diddy replied. "I still love her too much, and I feel like she loves me," he added, returning to a serious tone. "But... this is not the love story we wanted. We've just been getting into trouble and exposing ourselves to so much danger; it's not what I wanted for her after everything she had to go through. We must think about whether things are right."

"Hey, but that's no impediment; you can still convince her to come back with you... You don't even have to convince her; she loves you anyway."

"Ugh, with you it's impossible to talk, really," he replied again with disgust.

"It's that you're a fool, and you don't stop being one. And so much you wanted to see Dixie again."

"Would you stop meddling in my life, clear enough?!"

"Hmm, this way you'll be without a girlfriend forever, monkey!"

"And what do I care if I have a girlfriend or not!" Diddy replied, losing patience with him. "I only care about *Dixie*, I care about her and that we're okay... Oh, you don't understand, and you never will," he added, rolling his eyes.

Jemky continued to look at him strangely for a few seconds at his answers.

"Well... no, I don't understand it, seriously," Jemky said, still with a look of weirdness, but sounding with some sincerity. "I never understood your way of loving, monkey... I think you need to learn more about love."

"Well, I think the one who really needs to learn is you," Diddy replied mockingly. "Have you never really loved the girlfriends you've had?... At least did you think about whether things were going well to stay together?"

"Of course I loved them... But not like you; at least I did court them first by talking to them and listening to them, then with gifts and loving details. Later it was no longer so necessary to be that loving after I got her love; it's that easy. I didn't wait for things to happen without doing anything," he finished with a shrug. "But well, I ran out of girlfriends because they all broke up with me."

Diddy now looked at him strangely, at all the normality with which he talked about those topics. Suddenly, in the midst of the atmosphere that the conversation had taken, it occurred to him to ask Jemky a somewhat unexpected question, at least to see what he would answer.

"Hey, Jemky," Diddy said after a few seconds. "Can I ask... how did you learn about *loving topics*? I mean... who taught you that's how you win someone over? Your father?"

"Huh? What are you saying? Of course not," Jemky replied with a look of weirdness. "Our dads don't even care if we have a girlfriend or not... In fact, the one who taught me was the gorilla who showed us the millipede candies," he added with a small smile.

"Really? And that... was what he taught you?... And just to you or also the other three?"

"To all of us, but I was the one he wanted to teach the most. To be honest, Mandrew, Melenky and Rocky are also cowards like you; just with the breakups with their first girlfriends, they gave up,"

he added with a shrug. "And who taught you, monkey? I mean... who gave you love advice and taught you to be a dumb coward?"

"Well, the one who taught me to be a *'dumb coward'* was Donkey," Diddy replied with a sarcastic smile. "He has a girlfriend too, in case you don't remember, and he's done pretty well."

"Was it your uncle Donkey?" Jemky said with a look of great weirdness, and remained pensive for a while at that answer. "Wow, I thought no one had taught you anything about courtships... Sure, Donkey... He was always like a father to you, wasn't he?" he added as he got a much more serious expression. "My dad doesn't even tell me anything about what it means to have a girlfriend, nor does he care. Not even he has had one... And now I don't even know who my real parents were."

"Wow... I see," Diddy replied, beginning to look at him seriously as well, while becoming curious to know if he was able to open up to talk about himself. "Hey, and... you've had many girlfriends, right? Did you really love them all... or were you just trying to show off?"

"Uhh, well... What could I tell you? I did love them, but I don't think you understand; I mean... just as I see that you love Dixie, no; I think in your place I'd already have been bored of her... What? Don't look at me like that, monkey," he finished with a mocking smile upon seeing that Diddy looked at him with great strangeness at what he said. "But yeah, although to tell the truth... sometimes I didn't know what else to do after I got a girlfriend; it was as if... I only got excited when I wanted to win her over; everything became boring later."

"And... was that what that gorilla who showed you those sweets with millipedes taught you?" Diddy asked while still looking at him strangely and still curiously. "How *exactly* did he teach you? I mean... what things did he tell you?"

Jemky looked at him again with another expression of strangeness... as if hesitating to answer him at first. Then, as if now showing some doubts, he looked away so he could speak.

"Well, it's that... You see, monkey, it all started because he realized that I... I was afraid of girls," he replied with a slight smile before getting serious. "I mean, when I was little, I used to fear girls a lot, even the older ones and ladies. That gorilla always had a girlfriend every week and they greeted us, but I used to hide from them, until he asked me if I was a chicken. From there, he began to advise me and told me... that I looked like a stupid and ridiculous boy for being afraid of girls, that when I grew up, I was going to be a ridiculous fool if I continued like that."

"What?" Diddy exclaimed, watching Jemky with extreme strangeness at his unexpected and sudden answer. "Hey, and did you really listen to what that crazy gorilla told you? I-I mean no offense, but... I don't think that ape was right in the head with all that he has told you or taught the four of you to do."

"Uh, t-that's what he told me," Jemky replied, stuttering a little, as if he didn't know what to answer. "He told me I was ridiculous behaving like that. He told me that to get over it, I had to become rather a true flirter, otherwise I'd never be a true strong ape, and that nobody likes those who are not like that. And he gave me a few tips on how to get a girlfriend, so that I'd stop fearing... But well, in the end that gorilla... died, and left us alone after that."

Diddy was silent for another few seconds, as he thought and tried to analyze the answers Jemky gave him. He had never spoken in depth to any of the quartet about something about their lives and, although he felt he was being a bit reckless, he also found it intriguing.

"And... can I ask what he died of?"

"We think someone killed him, we don't know who did that to him, but... one day we just found him with serious injuries, and he never woke up again."

"Oh... That sounds like that ape wasn't on the right track," Diddy told him with a look of surprise and seriousness, before entering a moment of silence. "Hey, Jemky, and... I didn't know you were afraid of girls, how come? I mean... you're so..."

Suddenly, Jemky stared at Diddy quite seriously, which made him also return a look of strangeness upon seeing an expression not so common in him.

"Uhh... well, it's that..." Jemky replied, looking away at first, but suddenly, he just smiled as if nothing had happened and looked at him again. "Ah, did I say that?... No, no, I said it just jokingly, monkey. Of course not, forget it," he continued, still smiling mockingly, although this time it looked somewhat forced.

Diddy looked at Jemky with greater strangeness at his singular reaction; in fact... it seemed as if he had become defensive to answer.

Suddenly, a door to that room opened, and more people came in pushing stretchers, where Dixie, Rocky and Mandrew came. The latter showed themselves as if they were in a tense position in the presence of the people.

Diddy smiled at Dixie from a distance for a couple of seconds, and she returned the same gesture. The people left Dixie next to him, as if they already knew for sure that the two of them were inseparable in that group of little kongs.

Later, Melenky had also been admitted to that room, completing the entire group. The kids in the quartet gathered with each other too, except for Jemky... Diddy even did not know if he had seen wrong, but he seemed to see that Jemky had remained pensive and with an expression of discomfort never seen before in him, until later he realized that Diddy was looking at him and seemed to come to his senses, and then joined his group. Diddy made a gesture of strangeness, and even wondered if perhaps he had not been reckless somewhere in the conversation between the two of them, since the answers that Jemky gave him had generated some doubt and astonishment. The only time he had heard anything profound about them was the time Dixie had asked Jemky if at home nobody paid attention to him, or even seeing how their dads treated the four of them.

"Will we take them to the playground now?" one of the people asked the others.

"I would think so; they already look able to go. We even need to assess their interaction there during recreation moments. That's the last diagnostic phase before starting their respective rehabilitations."

The kongs didn't seem to understand what the people were talking about, but they just looked at them, each with different doubts. The kids in the quartet seemed to be tense, while Diddy and Dixie just wanted to know how long they would have to keep waiting for answers about how and when they could get out of that place.

"How did that happen so long ago?" Dixie asked, showing astonishment.

"They said that," Diddy replied as they were being carried on stretchers by people in the corridors. "I didn't quite understand what they were talking about."

"Had those tamers planned for years to do that atrocious mechanization on animals?"

"Something like that was what I understood from those people. But anyway, at least they said they'll review the video recordings... We'll have to wait and see what they say about it after watching them."

"You know something, Diddy?" Dixie said pensively for a few seconds. "Well, I don't know if it was true or not, but... when I saw my parents before I woke up... at the end they told me something... about how they always tried to keep us safe from those *tamers*."

"What are you saying?" Diddy exclaimed with a look of surprise. "How's that?"

"I don't know what they meant, but... just now that you tell me what they said about those monstrous men, I just remembered it."

Suddenly, their conversation was interrupted as the illumination of the outer sky reappeared in front of their and the quartet's eyes. The people had taken them back outdoors again, although this time, the six little kongs were speechless at the stage in front of their eyes: something that seemed to be a colorful playground area, as if it were for little children. The only detail in particular was that in that area there were vines and handles almost everywhere, as if it were designed for primates.

"We're going to be monitoring them, don't forget," one of the people said as they were transporting the six of them to that area. "And if there is any anomaly, we must go to help them immediately."

Then, the people were taking the six kongs in their arms and took them directly to that playground, where each one was placed in different points of the area.

"You're going to stay here, little ones," one of the people told them. "Take a break, and we hope we don't see any harmful behavior between you, okay?"

The people began to withdraw from the area completely, which became somewhat strange to the kongs, as they had said they would be monitoring them, but then downplayed it. Among the six kongs they looked at each other with so much confusion and without knowing what proceeded.

"Oh, I want to go home now," Mandrew said, breaking the silence and complaining as he watched the place. "I don't understand why they make us do absurd things, in what kind of hospital does someone do that?"

"Yeah, I want to leave too," Jemky added in the same way. "What time will they let us see our dads again? Won't they already be fine so we can all escape from this place?"

"I think they won't be gotten out yet, but they're recovering too," Rocky added, shrugging and sitting down. "Well, what else is left? We'll have to wait for them in the meantime."

"In that case... what's next then?" Mandrew said mockingly. "Stay and play in this silly area for babies?"

"Hey, and Melenky?" Jemky asked, looking everywhere upon realizing that their langur friend was missing.

"Hey, come here!" Melenky's voice echoed in the distance. *"Check this out!"*

The quartet looked strangely in the direction where they had heard Melenky, and immediately went to follow him. Diddy and Dixie, on the other hand, were still looking at the site doubtfully, but after a few seconds, they beckoned to follow in the footsteps of the quartet to snoop around as well. They crossed that striking playground, which had certain shortcuts, platforms and levels everywhere, which even caught the attention of the kongs.

"What's going on, Melen-" Rocky asked before being interrupted by a ball that bounced off his face, though not hitting him.

"Come and see this!" Melenky exclaimed in the distance.

All the kongs present were amazed at what they saw: it was nothing more than a pool filled with colorful and elastic balls, where Melenky was submerged and playing inside it.

"Hey, is it serious, Melenky?!" Mandrew said mockingly.

"Hey, this doesn't look bad," Jemky said suddenly when he too was already inside the ball pit.

"Really?" Rocky said as he entered, and then submerged as he slipped every second among the colorful balls. "Hey, it feels good to be here. Come, Mandrew, look!"

Mandrew still seemed hesitant to follow his group, but after a few seconds, he was joining the game too.

"Move aside, here I go!" Melenky was heard shouting suddenly.

Melenky was now on a platform that was a few meters above the ball pit, from where he then jumped with the help of a vine and dropped into the same pit, causing several balls to bounce when he fell.

"Hey, I want to try!" Jemky exclaimed, looking in amazement at Melenky.

"Let's see, me too," Mandrew added, becoming more confident with the game as well.

Suddenly, the quartet seemed to have regained energy, and began to climb the platforms and vines they found in their path, and then drop into the ball pit. It wasn't something seen in them before, but now they seemed to be having fun like little children.

"I bet you can't make it there and jump!" Jemky pointed to a high platform.

On the other hand, Diddy and Dixie had entered the ball pit too, although they were rather just inspecting the area with tranquility. When suddenly, one of the kids of the quartet fell right in front of them, causing several balls to bounce towards the two. Both were going to move away, but not before the other three kongs fell sharply on the colorful balls too, creating a splash of them. Then, the four of them were seen again.

"I told you to wait for me to jump first!" Jemky complained to Mandrew by throwing a ball in his face.

"I wasn't going to jump yet; Melenky was the one who pushed me!" Mandrew replied by returning the attack with another ball to Jemky and then to Melenky, although the latter bounced off Rocky.

"And why me, you fool?!" Rocky exclaimed, taking another ball too and throwing it to Mandrew, but it fell to Melenky.

Suddenly, a war of colorful balls had been set up between the quartet, who had started it first in a plan of revenge, but their faces were changing little by little until they took it to a game mode while laughing.

Diddy and Dixie were about to walk away from the meeting point, when suddenly, some balls bounced on both, which made them turn to look behind them, and they saw Melenky looking at them in a cheerful way.

"Hey, join," Melenky told them, throwing more balls at them and laughing playfully. "Don't just stand there, come."

The other three kids looked oddly at Melenky at first, but then looked at Diddy and Dixie for a few seconds, before smiling serenely at them and beckoning them to join the game, earning dubious looks from both of them.

"Come on, this is fun," Melenky told both, taking them by the arms. "Don't be boring."

"Yeah, come on. What else is there to do here?" Jemky told them in the same way. "You can play with us."

Diddy and Dixie were still negative at the idea of joining the quartet, but the four of them kept pulling their arms or throwing balls at them while laughing... although this time in a friendly way not seen before in them.

"We're not going to fight you; it's not what you think," Rocky added in the same tone.

Suddenly, among so much fiddling with the colorful balls, Diddy returned the same movement to the quartet, before Dixie did the same action too, throwing balls in large quantities to them, which made the four frustrated at them.

"Hey, but don't overdo it either!" Rocky complained to them, returning the throws in large quantities as well.

Suddenly, another ball-throwing war had been waged, this time between the six kongs, creating a competition on both sides. Then, some of them started running through the ball pit to be able to reach each other and aim better on the throws. Later, they went up the platforms of different levels of the area, taking with them several balls to throw at each other. Although Diddy and Dixie weren't so sure they had played along with the quartet, at least they felt the game was entertaining.

"You can't get this far, monkey!" Mandrew told Diddy in a mocking tone from a distant platform.

"Did you forget I could do long jumps?" Diddy replied in the same tone, making a cartwheel to gain momentum in jumping to that platform.

Without realizing it at first, Diddy and Dixie had integrated into the quartet's game, and in fact... they weren't having such a bad time. Obviously, both did not trust them entirely and still tried to be

aware in case the game began to get rough or with signs that they should flee. At least for Diddy, it was not the first time he played with the four of them; he even remembered a little about the times where they were his friends. The game had taken on an entertaining level, which made them continue for quite some time...

Chapter 86: A Deep Conversation

Chapter Notes

Extensive chapter.

"I can't believe it; did they really find that?" one of the people asked others. "A building hidden on an islet?"

"Indeed, and they're trying to find the location of that building. They may find important material there."

"Anyway, that proves that Messrs. Owens would be the masterminds of this case; they were *more than visible* in those video recordings. In any case, this will continue to be investigated."

A group of people was near the playground, finishing examining the six little kongs in case they had any inconvenience in their time of recreation. Those people were talking about the current case, apparently with recent updates and, as expected, the kongs were listening attentively to what they were saying.

"We'll see if those tamers will be sentenced, which is most likely the case. Did you also hear that the investigators are going to interrogate the pilot and co-pilot of the aircraft? In the recordings, it was revealed how the Owens made a deal with them and how they were going to take the little chimpanzees away; they only kept the adult apes and the other four little ones in cages at that time."

"Heavens, I honestly didn't think those video recordings would be that revealing," one of the people added as they examined Dixie. "Who would have thought that a few little apes would provide us with that information? It seems they're very intelligent and know how to defend themselves very well, as seen in those recordings."

"By the way... don't these two little ones get along with these four ones?" one of the people asked, pointing to Diddy and Dixie and then to the quartet.

"According to what we saw in those videos... no. Although they don't seem to get along that badly now; even this afternoon they have spent playing together normally. With whom we should be more careful is with adult apes; they may already have a more fixed aggressive personality... It was even seen that they know how to use guns, and it seems that the four little ones have been learning as well."

"What a horror. Surely that training is also the work of those Owens."

The people finished examining the little kongs, and then returned them to the playground area. Suddenly, another person entered carrying trays of various fruits to give to the kongs. After that, the people left again and left them alone. It was almost nightfall and all the kongs were quite hungry, so they didn't hesitate to start enjoying the food.

"At least the food here is delicious," Jemky said as he chewed on the food.

The six kongs continued to eat until they left their respective trays empty. Strange as it seemed, the people appeared again and took away the trays immediately, leaving the kongs alone again and earning dubious looks from them.

"Are they spying on us or what?" Mandrew asked, crossing his arms.

"They said they were going to evaluate us; they must be monitoring us somehow," Rocky replied, shrugging as they settled on some low platforms in the playground.

"What time will we leave here?" Melenky asked after a while. "I think we should go look for our dads. We'll enter through the windows in case the door is locked."

"We can't go in; the windows are closed now," Rocky pointed to the exterior walls of the clinic, where the windows on each level of it could be seen. "Besides, our dads still have to recover well. I think the sapphires have not yet finished working on them."

"I hope those tamers are locked up in jail soon," Melenky added with a somewhat worried look. "I'm really afraid they'll come for us."

"What are you saying?" Jemky said, looking at him strangely. "They won't come for us; together with our dads we'll give them their comeuppance again. They won't kill us, so there's nothing to fear."

"Hey, don't pretend," Mandrew replied to Jemky. "You were so afraid of them too, especially when that one with the patched eye grabbed you by your hair locks."

"Not true, I wasn't afraid at all," Jemky replied, becoming defensive, before sighing and getting serious a few seconds later. "Well... What could I tell you, I was afraid at the time, and it's something to worry about."

"Anyway, as soon as we can, we have to get out of here," Rocky finished. "And right, we'll play the next round we agreed upon earlier this afternoon in this playground later, don't forget."

The quartet settled in to take a break, while remaining serious. Diddy and Dixie were next to them, settled in that place too; strange as it seemed, this time they didn't feel uncomfortable in the presence of the quartet, at least not for the time being as long as they didn't bother them. In fact, during the time they were playing with them in the afternoon, they had not done so badly.

"What about you?" Rocky spoke to Diddy and Dixie. "Will you escape from this place too?"

"We don't even know where we are," Diddy replied earnestly. "And where do you plan to escape?"

"Well, the truth is, we don't know," Jemky replied. "I mean... the reason we came here was because our dads wanted to come for Rocky's dad and our uncle, and incidentally kill you two, taking advantage of an oversight of those tamers after they saw on the news that you were here," he added with a shrug. "But now we don't know if they still have that goal, I mean, they had no problem allying with Dixie to finish off those crazy tamers."

Diddy and Dixie made a gesture of discomfort at that answer, which even increased their uncertainty of staying in that place a little.

"Oh, but don't worry," Rocky said with a slight laugh. "At least the four of us don't plan to kill you at all; we have no reason to fight now. Maybe with our dads we'll just run away from here or go back to our island... And I guess you'll continue on your way to DK Island, right?"

"Obviously," Dixie replied, looking at them with some suspicion. "But we don't even know where it is. And by the way, did you also know anything about those tamers before?"

"Not really, our dads have never mentioned them to us," Mandrew said. "They just referred to them as 'the bosses' but we had no idea who they were."

"They haven't even wanted to tell us now," Rocky added, shrugging in a serious tone. "In addition... now it turns out that they're not even our dads. But well, that's normal: they never want to give us clear explanations of something."

"Yeah, and it was recently that they told us that they were dedicated to hunting animals," Melenky added in the same way. "They had always told us that they hunted exotic monsters and took them to laboratories, but actually what they did was that," he added before there was a moment of silence as they looked at Diddy and Dixie. "Anyway... and what about you two? Are you dating again?" he asked them, smiling again in a mocking way along with the other kids.

"Would you like to stop touching on those topics?" Diddy replied, getting annoyed again along with Dixie. "And no, it's not like you thought."

"You two are still wimps," Mandrew told them. "We thought you had gotten back together. Or maybe you'll get back later."

"That's how first loves are, they're always stupid and childish," Rocky added with a slight mocking smile. "I had a girlfriend a while ago, but that fool was actually cheating on her other boyfriend with me," he added, looking annoyed. "And on top of that, that idiot boy wanted to beat me up, but I ignored him."

"I had one too," Mandrew said the same way. "But likewise, that fool girl cheated on me with an ugly disheveled chimpanzee, uglier and disheveled than me... Ah, but at least I gave that wormhead his comeuppance for stealing her from me, although they stayed together anyway."

"And you know? I had a girlfriend too," Melenky added with the same tone of disappointment. "And that stupid girl cheated on me the following week with three lousy gorilla boys."

"Hey, aren't those the same stories you told us when you were the Jennies?" Diddy asked them with some curiosity and a puzzled smile.

"Yeah, yeah, the same stories," Mandrew replied. "Of course, in my case I just had to reverse the roles of the story because I was Mandy."

"The only different story was Jemky's," Melenky said, pointing to him. "He has never been cheated on."

"Exactly," Jemky said in a tone of pride. "On the other hand, girls have loved me a lot. Believe it or not, I've had twenty-five girlfriends."

"Oh, but you're exaggerating," Rocky replied, giving Jemky a little push. "You have only had eight formal girlfriends; as for the other seventeen girls: seven agreed to date you but then they disliked

you, another six beat you up for being insistent, and the other four almost killed you and we had to go to your rescue.”

"Ugh, shut up!" Jemky exclaimed, giving Rocky a harder push. "You didn't have to say that," he added before regaining his normal expression. "Uh, well, but yeah, I've had eight girlfriends and they were all very pretty and loved me... Some of them even left their boyfriends for me, and the fool boys stayed crying," he added with a mocking laugh.

"Eight girlfriends? And how long did you last with each one?" Diddy asked with a somewhat mocking tone and a look of strangeness.

"With each one? They were almost at the same time," Jemky replied in the same tone, before rolling his eyes. "But of course, then they broke up with me. I don't know how all of them became friends and suddenly one day one of them summoned me and they were all gathered there, and then those stupid girls broke up with me and humiliated me in public. Since then, I haven't had any more formal girlfriends."

"That's because then you became such a desperate boy for girls," Mandrew emphasized. "You took very seriously those conquest advice that the ape of the millipede sweets gave us."

"You guys didn't even take those advice; you were almost as cowards with your girlfriends as Diddy," Jemky replied, before calming down. "Anyway, that's the story."

"And... At what point have you had girlfriends?" Dixie asked them, looking at them strangely.

"Ah, it was in the time before we entered Kong Kollege," Jemky replied normally. "About five years ago, our dads left us at an animal shelter. There we met quite a few apes."

"Animal shelter?" Dixie asked along with Diddy. "Is it the..."

"No, it's not that one on Hurricane Island," Rocky reaffirmed with a few small laughs. "It's another shelter on another island, where we were before Kong Kollege. In that place we spent a long season... Or well, until the day they kicked us out of there and ordered our dads to take us away."

"Really?" Diddy asked, also looking at them strangely. "And why did your dads leave you in that place?"

"Well, because they were always working, just working," Mandrew replied with a shrug. "Well, that's what they've always done with us as far as we can remember: they left us in community places for us to stay and supposedly be taken care of, while they went on their journeys."

"What are you saying?" Dixie asked, keeping her expression. "So... your dads... didn't really see you much?"

"They did see us, but only on weekends or once a month," Jemky replied, before emitting a slight sigh. "But yes, a big part of our lives has been spent more with other apes than with our dads."

"And... they also left you when you were babies?" Dixie asked them with some insecurity.

"Well, we don't remember anything about that time," Melenky said earnestly. "But our dads have only told us that they carried us with them all the time, while they had the monsters in the laboratory... or rather, the animals they hunted. In addition... I don't know if it was an old dream or

a real one, but... I do remember seeing our dads killing some animals; I don't know if it was one of my earliest memories as I started to have recollection."

"In fact, Melenky has always told us that, although we haven't believed him that much," Rocky said, also getting serious. "But with the news they have given us, maybe it has been true. We were about three years old when our dads no longer wanted to have us with them all the time, and they hid us so that we could not see them working, since we already started talking and asking them questions."

"I usually remember something too..." Jemky added, also getting a seriousness. "I've also had those dubious memories like Melenky, although I was never one hundred percent sure. I remember seeing our dads with guns and also manipulating other animals in very strange and rough ways."

"But no, they never wanted to give us an explanation," Rocky added. "Whenever we asked them something about their 'works', they ignored us or made up other stories... But well, that's how they've always been."

Diddy and Dixie looked at each other for a few seconds, before looking back at the quartet... Suddenly, the four of them had their expressions changed; they all showed a seriousness rarely seen in them. While they both knew it was somewhat unwise to ask someone about a serious topic, they were quite curious at the time about them.

"And... were your dads the ones who taught you how to use guns?" Diddy asked them. "Were they who taught you to... do everything you usually did?"

"No, they never have," Rocky replied still earnestly. "What's more, whenever we have been caught carrying guns, they begin to lash us mercilessly."

"They've never wanted to teach us anything, actually," Mandrew added in the same tone. "They spent only a few days with us and then told us that they should go to work, or else they wouldn't be able to bring us food."

"Even when you were... little children?" Dixie asked them with some doubt. "I mean, did they at least take care of you or teach you basic things once you stopped being babies?"

The quartet made a gesture of weirdness to Dixie's question; as if such a question had seemed absurd to them.

"I don't know what exactly you mean," Rocky said, becoming more serious. "As I said, until we were three years old, our dads kept us with them; I guess they barely taught us to walk, eat, bathe and kept us distracted with toys. After that... they sent us to some kind of home for young apes, where we spent another three years... Although that place... was the worst, seriously."

"An orphanage, you say?" Diddy also asked seriously. "And... they left you there alone all the time?"

"Indeed," Mandrew replied. "It was a kind of school, but where we stayed for long periods. According to our dads, in that place we were going to be taken care of and be fine while they were away; they only went to visit us once a month and they left again... But that place was *dreadful*, really."

"And we really... had a very bad time there," Rocky added, keeping his seriousness. "In that place there were a lot of primate children, from little children like us at that time, to others who were almost adults."

"I still remember the first day when my dad and our uncle Will left us there," Jemky added in the same way. "We were very scared and didn't want to be left. Besides... the other children who spoke to us when we arrived, told us many awful things that happened there... and they were indeed right."

"Really?" Diddy exclaimed with an astonished and surprised look. "But what kind of place was that?"

"And that was like a school then?" Dixie asked them with some insecurity. "I mean, what were you made to do there?"

"Well... we were made to get up early every day to eat," Rocky replied. "Although the caretakers fed us, kept us clean and let us play, they also made us follow very strict rules and punished us very ugly if we didn't do something right, however minimal," he added, before looking down. This time... he looked *more serious than* before, even as if he were recounting some bad event. "In that place... there was a gorilla lady who was the headmistress... That lady was a *monster*; we all feared her, especially if someone did something wrong or if someone was reported for doing something wrong... Their punishments ranged from beating us with hundreds of lashes or hitting us with heavy objects, to locking us up in dark rooms and leaving us without food for days... She did that to me on several occasions, sometimes just because I warned Jemky, Mandrew and Melenky to behave when they did some mischief, lest they be punished... But she only blamed me most of the time."

"She punished me several times by beating me or locking me up too," Melenky also mentioned in the same expression as Rocky... even more deeply, as if he now looked like a helpless child. "And not only of her, we also... were afraid of some of the supervisors and caretakers of that place, especially a specific chimpanzee... He was funny with us at first and even played games with us, but... sometimes he left and returned behaving very strangely, and he started mistreating the children... That darn one beat us and mistreated us in dreadful ways. I even told the headmistress on one occasion that he gave me one of the many beatings... but she never believed us because she never considered any of the caretakers as bad, and even she herself used to send us with them when we didn't do something right... I spent several nights unable to sleep well in that place because of all that, and I only had nightmares when I did."

"Oh, no, what a horror," Dixie exclaimed, looking appalled along with Diddy. "How could they leave you in such a place?"

"Wait, but wasn't there someone there who saw those things wrong?" Diddy asked them. "I mean, did you ask someone else for help? Or did no one see those things?"

"No... we weren't brave enough to do it," Rocky replied. "What's more, we didn't know how or who else to ask for help in that place; we were very young... We never learned to ask for help, really."

"Only the four of us had each other," Mandrew said with the same low expression. "Even with our small heights back then, we tried to defend each other from other bad kids that were there... Many times, older kids also used to be mean to the little ones and did cruelties to them... There was a specific group of older gorilla kids who always liked to bully me a lot, scare me, hit me, make fun of me and tell me that I was very ugly. I remember that even once those fools tied me up, took me

to a lake in that place and threw me; I almost drowned, until Jemky, Rocky and Melenky came to save me as best they could. I told the headmistress, and those kids were punished, but... anyway, they continued to do the same and got away with it with me, not caring about anything, even if they were punished. Those idiots were savages.”

"It can't be," Dixie said, still shocked along with Diddy. "But what kind of care place was that?"

Both Diddy and Dixie were shocked by the stories the quartet told them; although they already knew that they did not have a good relationship with their dads and received bad treatment from them, they did not think that they had also gone through other awful situations; they had never seen them that way. They'd think the quartet was making it all up to make them feel sorry for them like they did through the Jennies, but no... This time, they were looking directly at them and seeing their expressions that they rarely let show.

"And that wasn't all..." Jemky added in the same way. "The older children who misbehaved were punished by making them take care of the youngest ones. I remember that for a season... I had to be taken care of by an older chimpanzee girl. She was very loving at first and took care of me, but sometimes... she treated me so badly and hurt me, and didn't leave me alone. If I ran away from her, she started beating me and locking me up for long hours, and she didn't care if she hurt me or I begged her to stop... Until one day I reported her and the headmistress punished her, but then..." Jemky paused a little, as if taking strength to continue, "then she went to look for me and gave me a terrible beating, took me to the shore of that lake and... submerged me to try to drown me, and was getting it. Until Mandrew, Melenky and Rocky arrived and pushed her into the water so that she let me go and I could escape, even if I felt like I couldn't breathe... I had quite a few nightmares afterwards, and I used to cry before sleeping... afraid that that crazy lunatic girl would look for me."

Jemky kept his eyes down, and even was seen with some moisture in his eyes, so much so that even a drop came out from one of them, but he turned around immediately as if he did not want to be seen. Seconds later, Melenky was also seen how his eyes moistened as he looked down. That surprised Diddy and Dixie much more, since at least in the time they had known them, they had never seen any of the four of them like that.

"And no one... no one but the four of us could help us," Rocky said with absolute seriousness. "When our dads went to visit us, several times we begged them to get us out of there, but... they just told us that there was no more place and no one else who could take care of us. We managed to get out of there when we were six years old because we had planned an escape with other kids. Our dads... were about to punish us, but we told them the barbarities we went through there, and we showed them our scars or very ugly wounds with which they were horrified, and at least they stayed with us to comfort us. After a few days, they asked us the names of all those who hurt us in that orphanage, and they left again with their guns in hand to that place. Then, they went back to their journeys as usual."

"Even so, they almost left us in another orphanage they had found," Mandrew added. "But we begged them not to do it, and that we were already old enough to take care of ourselves, so they took us to live on another island where they later left us at a shelter."

"But the truth is, we were also afraid of that place at first," Melenky said as he seemed to wipe tears from his eyes. "We didn't talk to anyone and even pushed away those who tried to approach us; we even stayed most of the time on the outside of the shelter. There were a few older kids who wanted to bother or bully us, but we were starting to fight them better, at least those of our height."

"And after a few months..." Rocky continued, "we met that male gorilla who became our friend, the one who showed us the candies with millipede venom."

"And... did you meet him in that shelter?" Diddy asked them with some hesitation about asking them any questions.

"Yes, on the outside to be exact," Rocky replied. "One day, while the four of us were outside the shelter, he approached us, asked our names and if we were alone. He was very good with us, so much so that even every day he waited for us on the outside to give us candies and gifts, he even played with us. We invited him to come with us to the shelter, but he never wanted to; he didn't want anyone to see him... A few months later, he invited us to his house in a strange place with many strange apes. He even wanted to adopt us, but we told him that we already had dads. Anyway, he was good friends with us... at least at first. He asked us what our dads were like and what our lives were like, and we told him everything we lived in the orphanage and that we were very afraid, even that we were afraid to interact with the other apes in the shelter, and that we needed to see our dads but they could not to us..."

"And that's when he showed us... that candies with millipede venom," Jemky said, turning again after apparently wiping his eyes. "He taught us how to prepare them and how to eat them... He told us that with that *all* our problems would end, that we'd no longer feel afraid or abandoned, that we'd only spend laughing... And truth be told... it worked for us."

"At first we didn't want to accept that from him," Rocky added. "But he insisted that it would help us. And many times afterwards, we kept telling him that we were still afraid of many things, but he... told us that we were being cowardly and that we had to be very tough, that we shouldn't fear anyone or let them take us for fools. He told us that if someone didn't like us, we should give them their due. He even taught us how to fight and attack."

"He told us that this is how we had to let off steam: fighting," Jemky added in a slightly trembling voice. "He told us that we shouldn't allow anyone to think they're superior to us. I remember that... I told him that I was afraid of girls because of what happened to me, and he just told me that I was being ridiculous, that I'd only be a failure when I grow up. And that's when... he also taught us how to get girlfriends, although I was the one he taught the most, so that I would no longer fear and make me stronger."

"He actually mocked us, now that I think about it," Mandrew said, annoyed. "Afterwards, he no longer listened to us or gave us gifts; he only told us that we should 'be very tough', not continue crying, and forget everything we had been through, and of course, he continued to offer us millipede sweets... And it's that in truth they did help us at least to survive, while our dads were away."

"We even feel more confident socializing later," Rocky said. "We met new friends at the shelter, with whom we got along very well, and we even got our girlfriends a couple of years later. We continued to take the millipede venom candies and enjoyed it a lot, really. The only detail afterwards... was that that gorilla no longer wanted to give us those sweets... He now wanted us to bring him jewelry and valuables in exchange for those sweets, and as we felt a great need to take them, we began to go in search of those objects... In fact, I admit that we even stole the belongings of the apes from the shelter and found it fun, as if it were a game."

"We used to escape from the shelter to go get valuables," Jemky added, his eyes down. "We really wanted those millipede candies; it was what made us happy and what we really found help with..."

And in the times we had enough, we even offered a little to our friends from that place as well. Everything went on like that... until our dads found out."

"In fact, we had gotten ourselves into more trouble already," Mandrew said. "Those of the shelter already wanted to expel us, we had had several fights with the other kids there, many times we escaped, we even took millipedes there and stole the belongings of everyone in that place... And they reported all that to our dads and ordered them to get us out of there."

"Our dads gave us the beating of our lives," Melenky said. "They whipped us for a long time until they got tired; they told us they didn't know what else to do with us. They asked us who had shown us those candies and we told him about our gorilla friend, and they told us why we had listened to him, that that ape just wanted to manipulate us and that children shouldn't consume those things."

"In fact, we answered them back," Jemky continued. "I even told them that... with those candies we felt so good that we no longer even missed them... Obviously, we earned another beating, although we didn't care so much at that time, and we even returned to the shelter as if nothing had happened. Then, we were going to return with our gorilla friend, but suddenly one day... he was dead."

"We had found his body," Rocky added before pausing. "He had... a lot of injuries and we never knew what happened to him. We fled from that place and returned to the shelter... although no one wanted to see us there anymore, so we just stayed outside. We continued to take millipede candies secretly and on our own, since at least we knew other apes close to that gorilla who also had, although of course... they asked us for jewelry or coins in exchange, so we went out to get them. And we went for almost another year that way."

"And after that was when we moved to Z Island," Mandrew continued. "Our dads went to visit us and found out that we still took millipedes, and they told us that they would enroll us better in a school... and yeah, in Kong Kollege. According to them, it was to "educate" us, but no idea if it succeeded; we only cared about feeling good, and for that, we continued to take those candies; we didn't care about anything else. On Z Island we found other hidden places where there were sweets and millipedes in exchange for coins. Diddy already knows the story from there: it was where we met him and... we became friends, although he seemed like a silly monkey to us because he never wanted to do the same as us or follow our games."

"And you already know the story," Rocky finished. "We went out to steal valuable items to exchange them for coins and get the millipedes. On that Z Island our dads had left us in a house just for us; since then, we had unlimited freedom to go out and nothing mattered to us anymore. Even when our dads returned, sometimes they brought their guns and we took them secretly so we could get valuable items more easily... Although of course, they found out and punished us, but we didn't care one bit about their punishments anymore. And the rest you know: Diddy was our new friend, since no one else in Kong Kollege wanted to talk to us, but he never wanted to play along with us, and to top it all he threw the guns we used to steal from our dads into the sea, and those guns were the most valuable they had... And yes, the beating we received from them was tremendous."

"And well, that's when we started to dislike Diddy," Jemky added. "He was like a little kid like the ones we then liked to bother and make cry."

"I admit I was amused by his frightened face," Mandrew said. "And by the way, Diddy... did you seriously believe that we were going to kill you, Donkey and Wrinkly if you reported us?" he said, recovering a little his mocking tone.

Diddy made an immediate gesture of disgust and some indignation after hearing that, although he also knew that he could no longer do anything about that situation.

"Hey, is it serious?" Jemky asked, looking at him with some oddity. "We weren't going to do that, monkey, I mean... maybe we'd have given you a beating or left you to your fate if you survived. In fact... on several occasions when we threatened you both, we weren't really going to act as we told you... Those threats were the same ones that were told to us in that orphanage when we were little, and they scared us a lot... Although anyway, that crazy girl did try to carry out her threat with me," he ended up adopting a seriousness again.

"And that's it, that's what we were going through," Rocky added, also showing himself serious again along with the others, before sighing. "But what can we do... This miserable life is where we had to grow."

"That sounds like... the story you told us as the Jennies," Diddy said with a doubtful look. "When you told us that you had been abandoned as little children on an island with several children and stayed in many places."

"Ah, that story that we made up for you," Rocky said with a shrug, before releasing another sigh. "Joking aside... I'd have preferred that to what we have really been through... and no one ever helped us, just barely the millipede sweets that made us laugh no matter how we felt."

"So, you... have always lived adrift in many ways," Dixie added. "Even without anyone being able to really help you all."

"Actually... yes," Rocky replied as he readopted a helpless child's expression along with the other three. "And yeah, the truth is that we have had to survive... We've been through several things... The only company many times has only been the four of us... More than once, other savage apes have tried to do us some evil or some other animal has wanted to attack us... More than once, we have seen death up close because of other ones, or even because of our journeys or from playing with our dads' guns... And they have barely helped us when we have had an accident... but almost never when we felt fearful or sad. Although anyway... things have also mattered less and less to us."

There was another moment of silence, as the quartet just kept their eyes down and continued with their expressions uncommon in them. Diddy and Dixie, meanwhile, had only been more shocked; they didn't remember having any deep conversations with the quartet, they couldn't even believe that they could open up to talk about their lives, not even Diddy had seen them talk like that when they were his friends. Both could not deny that the backstory of the quartet caused them more pity than they already had for them, despite everything they had done to both of them.

"I'm really... so sorry," Diddy told them with a tone of compassion and breaking the silence a little.

"So... deep down, it's what you've always wanted," Dixie also commented. "You just needed to be heard and helped from everything... Is that so, *right*? Have you just wanted to find a way to feel good and forget all those dreadful things that happened to you?"

Suddenly, the four kong children looked up at the two again, while now they had expressions that showed in their entirety helpless children and that they were only broken deep down... as if they both had touched a sensitive side of their being. Seconds later, the four looked away. Jemky even showed himself in disgust and turned his back again, as if trying to ignore Dixie's assumption.

"Is that... true?" Dixie added again with some insecurity. "You have only needed help from your dads throughout your lives and they haven't known how to be there... Isn't it?"

"Uh, well, it's not exactly that..." Mandrew replied, breaking the silence. "About those millipede sweets, we just wanted to try them and-"

"No!" Rocky interrupted suddenly, showing absolute seriousness, before looking at Diddy and Dixie. "Actually... maybe what Dixie just said is true."

"It's that it's very clear, not to offend you," Dixie added earnestly. "You've been through very awful things, you wanted to seek help, especially from your dads... but neither they nor anyone else could really do it, from what you tell us. And you just keep trying to find a way to feel good, to feel safe... to feel that no one is going to hurt you again."

"It's not that!" Mandrew replied as if he wanted to get defensive. "I mean-"

"No! It really is!" Rocky interrupted again quite seriously towards his group, before there were a few seconds of silence. "I mean, about looking for a way to feel good is true; what's more... were the millipedes for that, or not?"

"But we took them because we liked them and that's it," Mandrew replied, still in defense.

"But think about something," Dixie replied. "You were hurt a lot as little children, you wanted to seek help, your dads could not do well and left you to your fate, and that crazy male gorilla told you that he was going to help you with those weird millipede sweets, right? You told them what your lives were like, right?" she asked them before just Rocky and then Melenky nodded their heads a little. "So, that gorilla *manipulated* you all, took advantage of you by seeing you helpless, and only gave you terrible lessons on how to be strong, and not even your dads could correct you."

"Well, about that-" Mandrew said before being interrupted this time by Melenky.

"That's true too," Melenky said as he wiped his eyes a little again. "That gorilla offered us the millipede sweets for that very reason, so that we'd feel good and not have more pain. And besides, that's why he also taught us how to fight and other things."

"And by the way, something else," Diddy added also earnestly. "You liked to steal so you could get more of those candies, didn't you? Was that why you did it so much and behaved like that?"

"Well, that's true too, actually," Rocky replied.

"But about the things we went through at the orphanage and all that, we don't care anymore," Mandrew repeated, still defensively. "What's more, we hardly even remembered, and you two came to ask us."

"Uhh, actually... I do remember," Melenky said, his eyes still moist. "And to be honest... I have taken millipede sweets to feel better and forget any awful thing I don't want to remember."

"Me too, and it's not a lie," Rocky added earnestly toward Mandrew. "You and Jemky never want to admit anything, but you know it's true."

"Are you siding with these two?" Mandrew replied, pointing to Diddy and Dixie.

"It's not that!" Rocky replied. "It's just... It's *true* what they say. Or are you going to tell me that at first that millipede venom didn't taste disgusting but then you took it because it made you laugh and feel better?"

"Hey, and I don't know if you've noticed something too," Diddy said earnestly. "But sometimes... you all behave almost in the same way as how you have been treated or hurt. Is that why you are like that?"

The quartet didn't answer anything for a while; they just looked at them both again without changing their expressions.

"Is that true, right?" Dixie asked them, still not getting an answer from any of them. Rocky barely shrugged as slightest response.

"Why... didn't you say all this before?" Diddy asked them as there was still silence from the quartet. "I mean, I'm not in a position to say that when I didn't tell anyone that you bothered me either, but... it really would be the right thing to do."

"Monkey, we weren't going to tell you this," Rocky replied. "Or were you going to repair our damage?"

"Maybe not, but at least I'd have understood you a little better," Diddy replied. "At least things would have been too different with you when you were my friends."

"Ugh, but what else can we do now?" Mandrew exclaimed as if trying to be indifferent. "Everything has already happened, it's how we had to live."

Diddy and Dixie just watched them without saying anything for a while. The kids of the quartet only returned the same looks, and Melenky and Jemky could even be clearly seen having moist eyes as if they were about to burst. Mandrew was kept with an annoyed look and with some indignation, while Rocky was somewhat more serious.

"Can we continue talking to you?" Dixie asked them somewhat unsurely, receiving only a nod from Rocky. "Look, we don't know what you could do now; surely after this you'll go with your dads if those tamers don't get up again. And I don't know if you'd take what I'm going to tell you badly and continue to be the way you are, but if at some point you have the opportunity... *you could do things right*. We're very sorry for everything you all went through, and who knows, one day you might find someone or something that truly helps you without destroying you or leading you astray. *But just one thing*... you'll never get it if you remain the way you are; you'll never find any help from anyone if you just keep harming others."

"That's very true," Diddy added in the same way. "Just look at it: you and I were friends... but you treated me very badly and wanted me to be just like you, even if I told you that the things you did were wrong. And what I did was I just stepped away, but anyway, you all kept bothering me, and then you wanted to do the same thing with Dixie... And with that you only made us dislike you and have terrible references from you... That's what you're going to get from others if you stay that way. Just try to think about that."

"Don't be the same as how you've been treated," Dixie added, speaking calmly. "All you'll achieve is to continue getting into trouble and that anyone who runs into you hates you, even to the point of hurting you again. And seriously, you didn't deserve to have gone through all those dreadful things

and not truly get help, but... if after all that you go around hurting others, then you'll really deserve the worst."

"And it's not your fault everything that's happened to you," Diddy added. "Seriously, we regret what you've been through and the life that you've had to live... But you can still be different and at least not let your bad memories incentivize you to be evil. It's not anyone's fault to have been born in the life that each one has had to live. Look... I don't have my parents; I lost them when I was very little and I didn't know I'd never see them again until I got a little older. Sometimes, I have those bad memories and I haven't had a happy life either... But even so, not to mention that I haven't been perfect, I've never thought of hurting someone for no reason."

"And neither do I," Dixie continued. "I don't know if you remember what I told you while you were the Jennies, but I don't have my parents either, nor my aunt and uncle who were also like that, and I had to see them leave in dreadful ways. With my sister and my two cousins we lived a hellish life, and we were even almost like you: adrift and without anyone helping us... But even so, none of us are evil, and we found enough refuge when we arrived at DK Island and we have done well... And likewise, it's not that we've all been perfect, but we never got into bad habits."

"Hmm, sure... You haven't had a happy life either," Rocky said, looking at them pensively, before looking down. "But at least... you've been helped, I even suppose that your parents were different from ours, right? I mean, according to what you told us when we were the Jennies: Diddy... has Donkey anyway, who's like his father; and Dixie has no one... but I remember she told us that her parents were very good, and Diddy's too... right?"

"Well, that's true," Diddy replied. "But you shouldn't use that as an excuse for your bad behavior either... It's just what we're trying to tell you."

"That's what you must change," Dixie told them. "Just stop and think... if every time you do harm to others or to yourselves, do you really feel that you'll be freed from everything that way? Do you really think that that will make you feel the best? If you're looking to feel better, you can start there: *questioning* your actions... Therefore, every time you're going to harm someone, just stop to think about how the other one will feel, how you'd feel if someone did the same to you. Stop to think... about the *little, innocent children* you once were... and who were hurt. Moreover... I think I haven't really thanked you yet for saving me; you did a *good deed* there... Perhaps, deep down inside you, there's still a part of those innocent little children... and maybe you should listen to them... if no one wanted to listen to them before."

The quartet just kept the same expressions, while at the same time looking at each other as if nothing else they could do. Suddenly, Mandrew began to have some tears in his eyes too, just like Melenky and Jemky, who looked as if they had been repressing themselves for a while.

"Uh, hey, it's okay..." Dixie said in a compassionate tone. "If you want to cry... do it; we're not going to laugh if that's what you think. It's okay to talk and let go of something that's been bothering you for so long."

Suddenly, Melenky looked down again and just burst into tears, letting his eyes shed tears continuously; followed by Mandrew, who let out a few tears and wiped them immediately. Jemky, on the other hand, continued to remain strong at first, but within a few seconds... he gave a loud sob too and his eyes began to shed continuous tears and he tried to wipe them as he could, although before long, he got up to withdraw and go hide in another corner. Rocky, although his eyes were

moistened too, was the one who remained strongest, and just placed his hands on Melenky and Mandrew's shoulders as a gesture of compassion, even if he also looked almost the same.

Diddy and Dixie just kept silent not knowing what else to do; they had never seen the four of them that way; in fact... they never imagined seeing them like that. The quartet of those children were always their archenemies who had given them several headaches, and had even taken them for fools and even attempted to harm them. But in that moment of vulnerability and after listening to their stories, they couldn't help but think about how the four of them would have been different if their lives had been different... if at least someone had treated them better in the past and given them the love and attention they needed, because after and despite everything... the four of them were just children, they were children like the two of them, with similar lives but not the same luck.

"Hey..." Diddy called them after a while, with some insecurity. "We don't want you to take anything wrong, just in cas-"

"No... It's okay," Rocky replied, wiping his eyes one last time and a trembling voice. "I just... think we should leave things here."

"Okay, don't worry," Diddy said before pausing. "Uhh... Do you mind if we stay here?"

"Well, stay if you want," Rocky said with a shrug. "We won't stop you."

"Do you need to... say anything else?" Dixie asked.

"No, no, it's enough," Rocky replied, trying to regain his spirits. "Moreover... we could play the round we agreed earlier this afternoon in this playground zone later," he added, trying to smile at them a little again. "What do you say?"

"If you say so, well... no problem," Dixie replied, smiling a little along with Diddy, although with some insecurity.

"I'd say yes," Rocky replied, smiling again for a second. "Uh, but I don't know about the others."

"I'll join too," Mandrew added in the same way. "I think it's enough talking... Are you going to play, Melenky?"

"Well... yes," Melenky replied as he finished wiping his eyes and still showed some sadness. "Although maybe later... I don't feel like it right now."

"Okay, so... those of us who are," Rocky said, before looking towards some hidden corners behind. "And will Jemky play?"

Then, Rocky got up for a while to go to that corner where Jemky was to talk to him... He was sitting and hugging his legs in that hidden corner and with his head down, as if he didn't want to see anyone at that moment. Later, Melenky joined in to see him as well.

"Hey, Jemky... will you play the round we agreed earlier this afternoon?" Rocky asked, before looking at him seriously after receiving no answer from him. "Uhh... will you play?"

"Leave me..." Jemky replied in a brittle voice and without raising his head, while rubbing his hands over his eyes continuously.

Rocky just gave him a compassionate look for quite a few seconds, before slowly retreating and keeping his expression... Suddenly, Melenky, who continued to stay there, went to sit next to Jemky, whom he then patted lightly on the back as if he wanted to comfort him... Jemky looked up at him while his eyes were all moistened and he showed deep distress, as did Melenky, who then lowered his gaze and burst into abundant tears without stopping. A few seconds later, Jemky lowered his head again and continued to shed tears and sobs continuously, as if he had no comfort at that moment either.

On the other hand, Rocky had returned to where they were before... still with a low expression.

"Uhh, I don't think Jemky will play," Rocky whispered, returning to the group, as he again showed total seriousness. "And Melenky says later, so... we'd better play later or tomorrow; let's rest a little now."

"By the way... I think I need a break too," Mandrew said, standing up and sighing. "If you plan to play later, just call me, okay?"

Suddenly, Mandrew also withdrew from the conversation and went to another corner, although he just went to sit on the banks of the ball pit, and remained lost in thought, looking into nothingness for a long time. Meanwhile, Rocky just shrugged and continued to stay with Diddy and Dixie, who were not knowing what else to do at the time.

"What time will those doctors come to see us, by the way?" Rocky asked as he looked up at the building. Afterwards, he continued in silence for a while, before looking at Diddy and Dixie as if he wanted to speak to them, but also as if he didn't know how to do it at first. "Hey, uhh..." he said in a tone of shyness, to which they both turned to look at him again. "By the way... thanks for... listen to us," he said, smiling a little, and then getting serious again. "Yeah, really... I know I said I didn't want to continue talking about it, but... we had never been able to talk about these things like this; it has always been a sensitive issue for us, although we may not have wanted to acknowledge it. And... it's true what you say, I admit it:... we've just been looking for ways to feel good and forget all the awful things we've been through... and maybe we haven't been doing it the right way."

Both Diddy and Dixie looked at each other with a little astonishment at what Rocky had just said; they didn't know what to say at first, but they smiled at him a little later anyway to talk to him.

"Uhh... Okay, don't worry," Diddy said, trying to smile at him a little. "As we said: it's okay if you want to talk about something that has bothered you for so long, as long as you do it calmly."

"Moreover..." Dixie added in the same way, "acknowledging your actions and mistakes can be the first step in trying to improve... If you want, of course."

"Wow... and no one had talked to us like you either," Rocky said, smiling a little, but showing some sadness. "Almost every time we've talked about this with someone, they used to say things that made us feel worse... Like the male gorilla who showed us those millipede sweets, or in the shelter where we were before: Melenky was mocked, for example; Jemky was given very mean comments; or Mandrew was bullied too, or he himself used to joke about our situation and I told him not to do it with that. And yeah... it was in those sweets with millipede venom that we found real comfort."

"Oh... All that sounds terrible," Dixie said in the same tone. "Truth be told... we never thought you had lived like that; I mean... we knew that you had no control from your dads, but never that other apes have also hurt you in awful ways and led you astray."

"Besides, not to offend or anything, but..." Diddy added, "I even thought that you were just crazy kids who bothered other ones because you wanted to feel superior and that's it; I mean... you actually have been, but I never thought that you had gone through much worse situations. What's more, I believed that... you didn't even have feelings."

"Hey, of course we do," Rocky replied, smiling at them with some strangeness, before getting absolute seriousness and looking down. "At least I do... I've had many days where I've felt the worst or didn't feel like living. Melenky shows them too, in fact; many times, I have seen him cry and he tells me how he feels, and I also tell him about me. Maybe Mandrew and Jemky do tend to act tough, if it weren't for the fact that several times, they overdid it with millipede sweets... There were even times when Jemky used to do it until he fainted, and when he woke up, he just started to cry and tell me that he had done it on purpose, although afterwards he didn't want to talk about how he felt anymore. And yeah... maybe we've hurt ourselves too, but... we haven't found any other ways, it's as if we just... survived."

"Oh... Geez, I didn't think your issues were so bad," Diddy said, looking at him quite compassionately now. "And didn't your dads... really help you or anything?"

"They didn't even care that much; they even spent most of their time away from us," Rocky replied, shrugging and looking down at the ground. "I mean, they did comfort us at first, as we said, but then it was as if it depended only on us to heal our wounds. Barely, our dads helped us if we had accidents, but... not to mention they used to reproach us afterwards. And so... what could be done, because anyway... they have also been the only ones who have at least helped us a little."

"And by chance... Do you think you could still change and stop your bad behaviors?" Dixie asked them with some insecurity.

"I don't know," Rocky replied, emitting another sigh, before showing tears in his eyes again, but trying to wipe them away. "Maybe I do, but... I don't even know how. First of all, we have to see how we get out of here," he finished, looking back at them and shrugging his shoulders. "Anyway, monkeys, I think we should leave everything here now... Don't you want to play a little in this playground? At least to count how many platforms there are."

Diddy and Dixie, although still somewhat pitied about the four of them, smiled a little at Rocky and agreed to spend some time with him. They even continued to sit in the same place to talk, this time without touching on any sensitive topic. Later, they walked on the playground area for a while and also called Mandrew, who was nearby. While Diddy and Dixie never expected to hang out with them, at least they weren't feeling threatened this time, and the atmosphere was quiet enough at that moment to agree. They didn't know how they got there.

Chapter 87: For a Week

There had passed a week in that wildlife clinic, where Diddy and Dixie had to stay. Truth be told, staying in that place wasn't what they wanted; they felt the urgency of returning to Hurricane Island, much more to DK Island, but they still had to wait for news to ensure that they would have nothing to worry about on their return, above all: to wait for the fate of the tamers, the apes, even the quartet.

Speaking of the quartet, they had been their mates again, though this time not in class, but in recovery. Although all of them had their recent physical wounds healed, the doctors continued to conduct examinations and activities for them, which the children often did not understand but at least found enjoyable. Truth be told, the people had treated them well, as if they were pets; they were quite affectionate and attentive to the little kongs, so much so that even the quartet were taking them little by little in a better way.

In the same way, and although Diddy and Dixie needed to get out of there, they had not had such a bad time, not even being in the company of the quartet that, in fact, at no time did any of them behave badly as could be expected... It was as if they were different children from how they already knew them, which even surprised Diddy and Dixie. Even the six of them used to play together in the hours assigned to them by the doctors, ate together and even had occasional conversations. Between times, Diddy and Dixie felt as if they were with Jenny's quartet when they still did not know the truth about them; especially in Rocky and Melenky, they saw quite a bit of similarity to how they were being Ricky and Melvyn.

As for the group of adult mandrills and orangutans, they were isolated in another recovery room, not letting them have contact with the young kongs. On certain occasions, only Jemky and company used to visit them secretly to see how they were, although they did not stay for that long.

For some reason, the atmosphere felt so calm for Diddy and Dixie, that between times their worries would go away; they didn't know what those doctors had, but they even felt the activities they put them to do so well. It was as if it helped them to stay calm while they waited for more news, and also as if it helped them to recover a little calm after all the heavy journey they had had to go through so far.

Even so, Diddy and Dixie weren't entirely calm either; there was a detail that, when remembering it, uncertainty invaded them again... and it was about the herd of animals along with the kong children and Mr. Pinky. Both did not know what to do about it or how to obtain information about their fate, but they only had to pray to the universe that at least all of them had reached safe dry land... But they still had to wait before assuming the worst...

Chapter 88: News of an Outcome

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Diddy and Dixie were in the outdoor area, where the people took them and the quartet on several occasions. Both were again with easels, painting on some canvases. That activity was one of the most frequent that they had been put to do and, at the same time, it was the one that relaxed them the most.

"Is it all of us?" Diddy asked Dixie as he watched at her canvas, which had quick scribbles of representations of what the kong family were on DK Island, including the two of them.

"You said it," Dixie replied, smiling.

"At least I think you represented Cranky well," Diddy pointed out jokingly toward Cranky's drawn silhouette, which showed him raising his cane and making an angry expression.

Dixie gave a few small laughs and gave Diddy a slight push playfully. Afterwards, they both looked at the drawing and couldn't help but imagine that it was really happening.

"We'll go back to the island..." Dixie said, smiling a little and more confidently. "Let's hope everything can go well."

"I know it will be," Diddy replied in the same way, then looking at Dixie. "At least I hope they have seen the letters we sent for them. And when we get back, I hope everything will be okay again, and so will we."

They both smiled at each other for a few seconds, as Diddy subtly took Dixie's hair. Suddenly, she also placed a hand on his cheek, although within a few seconds, they both immediately moved away, while having slight expressions of blushes and smiling at each other with some shyness.

"Uh, well... and what have you painted?" Dixie asked, still trying to hide her blush.

"I was just trying to draw a race car," Diddy replied, showing his canvas and diverting the topic as well.

"Ahh, hadn't you said you had nothing to do with each other anymore?" Mandrew appeared behind them suddenly with a mischievous tone.

"Hey, no. What are you talking about?" Diddy replied annoyed, but struggling again not to blush. "We were just talking."

The quartet was painting alongside them too, albeit a little further away.

"By the way, what did you paint this time?" Melenky asked them, appearing by surprise too, while holding brushes in hand and taking a look at Diddy and Dixie's canvases. "Not bad. Want to see ours? Mine turned out great."

"What are you talking about? That's ugly," Mandrew said, pointing to his canvas. "Mine turned out better."

"Oh, sure. Yours is ugly too," Jemky said, who was also painting on his canvas. "You haven't seen how mine turned out."

Diddy and Dixie also took a look at the quartet's paintings, which had only abstract doodles. But other than that, both continued to be surprised by the behavior of the quartet; so far, they had behaved normally. In fact, Diddy had seen them like that only in the time they were his friends. During those days, they even had reached to tolerate each other with the four, to the point of being able to share moments with them. Obviously, neither of them was going to give them another chance as friends; Diddy even made it clear to them, but at least they were on neutral terms.

Everyone continued to paint on their respective canvases. Suddenly, they heard some movements near that area. They would think it was one of the people, but these, being tall, would have already been seen for a while. Suddenly, those footsteps were heard right behind them, and they turned to look at what it was.

"It's the Jennies!" Melenky exclaimed, pointing at them. "But what are they doing here?"

"Did the doctors let them out?" Diddy wondered.

Indeed, Jenny and company's quartet were now in front of all of them, and immediately headed towards Diddy and Dixie as usual.

"Maybe they escaped," Dixie said as they tried to keep the recently arrived quartet calm.

Suddenly, the mechanical children turned to look at the other quartet, to whom, as always, they made gestures of wanting to confront them.

"No, no, no! Stay still!" Diddy ordered them, stopping them as soon as they wanted to pounce on the other four kids. "Understand that now is not the time to fight."

"Look, there they are!" a voice known to everyone was heard from afar.

When they turned to look in the opposite direction again, they saw a group of people moving quickly towards them; they seemed to be looking for Jenny's quartet.

"Oh, these little ones don't stop being restless," one of the people said, looking towards the mechanical children.

"It seems that after all they're still friends with these two little ones," another of the people added, pointing to Diddy and Dixie. "Right, tomorrow will be the day when we'll be able to release the two of them; they've been good enough to be able to do it."

Both Diddy and Dixie looked at each other and opened their eyes to the fullest after hearing those words from the people.

"And what will we do with the other four little ones?" another of the people asked, pointing to Jemky's quartet.

"They'll still have to stay, perhaps for several months or even years; there's a lot to work on with them. In addition... they'll need to undergo medical treatments due to the malignant symptoms they have been diagnosed with, otherwise they could have complications and perish within a few years, which in fact... is already quite likely to happen. According to the physical and psychological

examinations we've been conducting on them, in addition to the scribbles they often paint, it's evident that they've experienced various traumas in their lives. Even in the analysis made on the video recordings, we could see the environment they were living in, so they'll remain here for further study. As for the other two little ones, we'll be able to take them to Sunflower Island soon; they also seem to have experienced traumas, but they have better development to handle them; at least they haven't shown signs of violent behavior easily."

Jemky's quartet with Diddy and Dixie looked at each other, while listening to the people.

"And the other four little mechanical ones?" another of the people asked, pointing to Jenny's quartet.

"We'll have to have them here; we'll determine what will be done with them later. After all... they're not living chimpanzees."

Immediately, Dixie rushed to the people's attention, taking their arm, after hearing that.

"Huh? What happened, little girl?" the person asked Dixie.

Dixie began to point to Jenny and company's quartet insistently and, as her abilities gave her, she gestured to the people, trying to tell them not to stay with the quartet.

"What are you saying?" another of the people asked her again, looking at her strangely. "These four little ones?"

Dixie, speaking with primate sounds, held Jenny's quartet while pointing to herself and Diddy. Later, Diddy also began to do the same, catching people's attention more.

"That you want to keep them?" they were asked again. "That you want to... take them with you? We can't do that."

Diddy and Dixie continued to insist as best they could; they did not want to leave Jenny's quartet with them, since their purpose was to take them back to their respective families, or at least that a dignified farewell be held in memory of those children.

"But how are you going to take these little ones?" one of the people replied, denying Diddy and Dixie's request as far as they could understand them. "It could be dangerous or risky to leave them with you adrift."

"Do you know that they're already... well, they're not like you anymore?" another person told them. "And now they have been turned into mechanicals, who knows what fate they may have if we leave them. They as such will no longer suffer, but they may cause problems for others."

Diddy and Dixie gave them a few disappointed looks towards the people, at the same time that they felt frustrated that they could not make them understand that maybe some loved one of those children would be waiting to see them again.

Suddenly, Dixie came to mind with an idea that could be better understood. She went to take a blank canvas and a small brush with a few colors of paint.

"And now what's going on?" one of the people asked, watching her strangely.

Immediately, Dixie began to make quick scribbles on the canvas, and she was showing them to the people to catch their attention. After that, she pointed again to the quartet and then pointed to one of the scribbles, which seemed to represent an island.

"Is that... an island?" the person asked, and Dixie nodded before pointing to the quartet again. "These chimpanzees?"

Dixie continued to make other doodles where they now showed abstract silhouettes of large apes next to small ones, each with a group. In the same way, she tried to put the predominant colors of the quartet in the silhouettes of the little apes, as if she wanted to represent them. Afterward, she pointed to the quartet and then pointed to the silhouettes of little apes.

"Ahh, are you talking about the family of these little chimpanzees?" one of the people said, to which Diddy and Dixie nodded instantly. "Do you know who they are?"

Dixie hastened to make other small scribbles where she intended to make expressions to the large apes she had painted, which showed facial expressions of despair or sadness. She didn't really know the family of those kong children, but she had to keep trying to communicate to make them let them go with the two of them. Then, she pointed to the quartet again.

"That they're searching for them?" the people asked them again. "Let's see if I understand... That the families of these chimpanzees are searching for them on an island?"

Diddy and Dixie nodded immediately and with greater hope that they had understood them.

"Ahh, that's why they want to take them," one of the people told the others. "Then we could let them go with them."

"What are you saying?" another one replied. "We can't just give them to the two of them; they're little creatures, how are they going to take care of four other little creatures?"

"But they plan to take them with their families; if they say it, it must be for something. They even seem to know about these four little ones better than we do."

"But they're mechanized chimpanzees; they can become too restless to leave them adrift. How are two little apes going to take care of four other ones?"

"Come on! The two are seen to be very intelligent, even in the video recordings it's evident that: they're quite strong and bold to fight. Besides, you can see that they get along quite well with these four little ones; they'll be able to handle them very well."

"Well, okay. But... I think we'll have to talk about it well or reach an agreement, okay?"

Diddy and Dixie felt a slight frustration seeing that some of the people were still hesitant to give them Jenny's quartet. Even so, they would have to find some alternative to be able to take them.

"By the way, it's going to be lunch time; we have to get it ready for these little ones."

The people withdrew from the area and left the kong children alone, while they all watched them to the end.

"Oh, no, and now what will we do?" Diddy exclaimed worriedly.

"There has to be a way," Dixie said, thinking about it. "Or at least hope that in the end they say we can take the Jennies."

"Do you know anything?" Rocky told them, meddling in the matter. "I think the Jennies have almost no family; I don't think anyone is really waiting for them on Hurricane Island."

"What are you talking about?" Diddy replied, looking at them strangely.

"Well, we haven't told you," Rocky added, "but our dads have told us that Jennies are not loved... I mean, the *real* Jennies in life. They said they were children who spent a lot away from home because their families didn't love them. They saw that in the time that they shadowed them to catch them."

"What are you saying?" Dixie exclaimed, looking at them in the same way. "How can they not have someone who is searching for them?"

"Yeah, it's true," Mandrew replied. "That's why it may be in vain that you look for someone who is waiting for them. It was barely known that only Ricky and Mandy had been searched for."

"But we'll take them anyway," Dixie replied, "it doesn't matter if no one claims them... At least so they can have a new life... or a dignified ending."

"I suppose there must be at least two apes looking for them anyway, right?" Diddy shrugged.

"It's that I really think that's unlikely," Rocky said earnestly. "Maybe barely Ricky could be claimed. I don't know if you remember, but... that time you took us to the shelter, I mean, to the Jennies, a gorilla came out saying that Ricky was his son; I think he'll be the only one to claim him. I don't think so for the other three, based on the stories our dads told us about them."

"And... what did they tell you?" Dixie asked them in disbelief at first. "So, no one is going to be looking for their children?"

"I don't think so," Rocky replied with a shrug. "For example, as for Ricky's case, they say he grew up without his mother, and his father had disappeared a couple of years ago until recently he was in the shelter. Then, he was adopted by another family where they didn't want him. His real name was *Tommy*, by the way. But yeah... barely, only his father must be searching for him."

"How terrible," Dixie said with pity. "We still don't know how we're going to tell him or how anyone would tell him about his son."

"Well... on that hand, you may not even have to worry about the other three kids," Rocky added. "For example, as for Melvyn's case, I see it as difficult. Our dads told us that his father was very evil and abandoned him, and his mother treated him badly and left him alone... His real name was *Timothy*. Remember the names, by the way, in case you try to find their relatives."

"How can it be possible for those parents to be like that?" Dixie said, looking more shocked. "And what do you know about Jenny and Mandy?"

"Almost the same," Rocky replied still earnestly. "Mandy was actually called *Destiny*. Our dads said that her father died, and that her mother then abandoned her with her siblings, which by the way... maybe they were the ones looking for her, as Mr. Pinky had told us that time. And as for

Jenny, we were told her name was *Ally*. If you wonder about her, both parents treated her so badly that she herself had left home to live elsewhere.”

"Come to think of it," Melenky said more seriously, "those children weren't so different... to us.”

"Oh, don't even remember us, please," Mandrew replied. "Although maybe it's true... They were kids adrift too.”

"How could they have been like that with these kids?" Diddy said, looking at Jenny's quartet. "I mean, didn't those parents love them at all?”

"Poor children, I wouldn't have imagined that they lived like that," Dixie added, looking at them too, while they still gave an innocent look and even smiled.

"I don't understand it either, now that I think about it too," Rocky commented quite seriously. "Why did those parents decide to have them if they weren't going to love them?”

"And you know? That's not all," Jemky said earnestly towards Diddy and Dixie. "Our dads told us that the other kids whom they were going to mechanize... have stories like that too.”

"What?!" Diddy and Dixie exclaimed in unison.

"Actually, yes," Melenky added. "That's why they told us that those kids were easy targets to catch, because they spent a lot of time outside their homes *fleeing* from them.”

"It can't be," Dixie said along with Diddy with some concern.

Diddy and Dixie had been shocked again. They would think that Jemky's quartet would be playing a joke on them, but the atmosphere and the attitudes they had didn't show that, besides they had heard that last fact in the video recordings. Now they no longer knew what might also become of the herd of formerly kidnapped kong children, even if first of all, they didn't even know exactly if they were okay.

"So, it might be hard for you to find someone to give these children to," Rocky told them still earnestly. "But of course, if you want, you can try anyway.”

"Hey, and by the way, I have a question," Dixie said later. "I know it's a somewhat incoherent question, but the Jennies can't be revived anymore, right? Or at least, that they can return to live normally as they are.”

"But what a question. Obviously not," Mandrew replied. "I mean... there's nothing that can be done with them if what you want is to 'give them back their lives' so to speak.”

"What's more, there's another detail," Rocky added. "Our dads told us that these kids will become more violent and dangerous over time if no one takes care of them or educates them. They won't be the same again, although they could continue to 'live' in their current state. But if you can't find someone to take care of them... you may consider turning them off when you return to Hurricane Island.”

"But then..." Diddy said, looking at Dixie with some disappointment, "if no one can take care of them, does that mean that all that remains is... to say a final goodbye to these children and that's it?”

"That's right," Rocky replied with a shrug and a tone of seriousness. "Moreover, if you wonder how to turn them off, then just open their heads and look for a blue button in that black box and press it; they'll be completely motionless again."

Suddenly, a group of people appeared again, who went towards the kongs and began to take them in their arms. It was noon, so they assumed it would be lunch time.

"It seems that the little ones here have been quite calm," one of the people, who was holding Jenny's quartet, said.

Everyone moved the little kongs to another place, this time in front of an entrance to the clinic, where they often served food to them. They left them alone while they ate, but later returned to take a look at them.

"I think we could quietly let them take the mechanical chimpanzees," one of the people commented. "The spider monkey and the blonde chimpanzee know how to interact well with them."

"We're still in doubt about that; we'll have to think about it later."

Suddenly, another person arrived at the scene in a hurry, heading straight towards the group of the other people.

"Hey, have you heard the latest news?!" the newcomer said with an astonished expression.

"What? What happened?" another one asked with a look of curiosity.

"Messrs. Owens..." the person replied before pausing, "They'll be prosecuted!"

"What are you saying?! Seriously?"

The people gathered to listen to the newcomer. Meanwhile, both Diddy and Dixie and Jemky's quartet looked at each other in amazement.

"Yeah, come and read the news," the person told the others.

The group of people rushed back into the clinic. Shortly after, the kongs were also curious, so they beckoned to each other to follow the steps of the group of people and listen to what they had to say.

"They managed *to locate* that building hidden on that islet and raided it!" one of the people told the gathered group, who were in a corridor. "They found a lot of evidence there regarding the suspicions about Messrs. Owens."

"So, that building turned out to be real?" another of the people asked.

"Indeed. The specialized research team found experimental laboratories there, disturbing photos of wild animals, instructions for various strange procedures, and on the top floors there were a lot of *cells*."

"It can't be! Why all that?"

"Those gentlemen known as the directors of the now-defunct 'Zoovlaki' circus turned out to be also *wildlife and illegal diamond traffickers*. In addition to that, they carried out atrocious practices

with those animals and traded with them as well, even for meals in restaurants. But they only masked themselves as owners of that zoo and circus.”

"Is that confirmed or are they suspecting it?"

"No, it's *confirmed*. They were subjected to a private interrogation at the hospital, where the most compelling evidence was presented to them, and they had to confess. And you know what else they did? They trained apes of different species to procure animals for them! In fact... the mandrills and orangutans we have in this clinic are their latest slaves; they *overexploited them for years*, if not almost their entire lives. Sometimes they hunted them themselves, but most of the time they used those apes to obtain animals more quickly.”

"What a horror!" the other people exclaimed, looking at each other. "And what do you mean with *the latest*?... So, were there more apes exploited by them?"

"That's right. Even in that building were found photos of many of those apes. They had a lot of them, but they exterminated them when they rebelled, or they died on the expeditions where they sent them to hunt animals. They had all of them tracked with integrated circuit systems the whole time, in fact.”

On the other hand, there were Diddy and Dixie along with the two quartets listening to everything from the corner of a wall. Everyone, especially Jemky's quartet, was gawking and staring at each other at that last detail.

"And do you remember I also mentioned 'diamond trafficking'?" the person who was informing continued. "They created *elixirs with illegal diamonds* to give to their apes as an antidote in case they got injured or had accidents, and while that may have been effective for them, in the long run, the properties of those stones could cause severe *irreversible* damage to those poor apes if they have been excessively supplied on them over the course of their lives; moreover... perhaps the four little primates we're taking care of were given those elixirs; that would explain their initial examinations where we found untreated old wounds inside them. And not only that, those former tamers also used those elixirs for the remains of those animals that they sold in food companies, and none of them knew it.”

"Ohh, no. Those gentlemen were *crazy*," the people exclaimed, showing shock. "They're criminals.”

"And another thing else: those illegal diamonds were extracted from the underground caves of an island called 'Hurricane Island'... And that island is *illegal* and even *dangerous* to visit for people, especially due to the nearby maritime conditions.”

"But how far do those gentlemen go?!"

"And that's not all. It wasn't only them, but it's *a whole network*. They're the *leaders* of that network, and there are *many* more like them in different cities who also traffic in wildlife, and some also overexploit primates. Although fortunately, in the hidden raided building, the investigators also found addresses of the *whereabouts* of those other individuals, and that's already under investigation to put an end to it all. In fact, the pilots who came in the aircraft are *also* members of them, and they'll be prosecuted too... Those three Messrs. Owens could be facing a twenty-five-year sentence for various charges and a hefty financial penalty.”

"Just that? Not even that time is enough for all the things those scoundrels have done! They should give them life imprisonment!"

"Unfortunately, that doesn't apply to crimes involving animals... But don't worry, those men are over fifty years old; by the time they finish that sentence, they'll be in their eighties... And besides, I remind you of the critical physical condition they were left in after the incident in this clinic; those monsters won't even get up again. Moreover... it's likely that they won't even make it to the end of their sentence alive or even to the trial; because they were granted that trial, but authorities say that actually... their physical conditions won't let them live for much longer, so they probably don't have much time left. But they won't escape from any sentence this time, rest assured."

"Thank goodness; it's the least they deserve for doing so much barbarity to many creatures. They already had prior records for animal abuse and weren't taken seriously."

"In the case with their circus three months ago, they were only given pretrial detention and they fled, and the one almost a decade ago went unpunished, but not this time. Even with the current case, the one from *almost a decade ago* was corroborated, where they attempted to carry out a mechanization of little primates from another circus based on the properties of the diamonds they were trafficking, especially with deep green emeralds."

"Why did they want to do that atrocious mechanization?"

"Those three gentlemen had that plan for a long time. They wanted to mechanize primates to exploit them better in obtaining animals. They chose young primates for their agility, their endurance and ease of procedure, and to turn them into mechanical so they wouldn't have to take care of them at all. They planned to commercialize them too, in fact. They even planned to apply it later with older primates."

"For such a long time?"

"That's right. The people who reported them back then, almost a decade ago, were the owners of the also now-defunct *Chimp Cirque* circus. Those three tamers wanted to buy two little chimpanzees from them: a female baby and a female toddler who lived in that circus with their parents and under the care of the owners there. According to those tamers, they wanted them for their circus because of their golden hair that had the ability to fly, but actually, they wanted them for the mechanization plan."

From her location, Dixie made an expression of extreme shock as she felt as if blood was rising to her shoulders; she seemed to have heard something that left her deeply shocked. At the same time, Diddy also looked at her and was amazed at what they had just heard. Even the quartet turned to look at them at their sudden reactions.

"Yeah, they wanted to start their mechanization plan with those two little female ones when they grew up. And not only that; from the green eyes of one of them, they were going to extract a substance that would give the mechanized apes the ability to fly with their hair. Fortunately, the owners of that circus let that chimpanzee family escape along with another couple of primates who had a little gorilla son, whom they also wanted to buy to mechanize. They even gave those primates some diamonds, including an emerald, so that those tamers couldn't execute that plan. Then they reported them because those Owens even tried to *bribe and threaten them* to hand over those little ones no matter what"

"Holy heavens, those gentlemen are savages, they really deserve prison! How far are they willing to go with poor animals?"

"And not long ago, they resumed that mechanization plan, and unfortunately... they did it with those four little ones who came in the aircraft, they even did it with the help of the mandrills and orangutans we have admitted here. But well... that would be the last thing they will have done, because now the full weight of the law will fall upon them! Or even... perhaps they won't even make it to the trial alive due to their current physical conditions."

"Thank goodness. Those inhuman scoundrels have to pay for everything they did!"

The people continued talking about the events, even though they had no more news to share.

On the other hand, Diddy and Dixie along with both quartets remained silent for a long time. Except for Jenny's quartet, everyone had been left with shocked expressions as they looked at each other not knowing what to say about it.

"So..." Dixie pronounced, looking into nothingness. "Was that what my parents tried to tell me when I saw them at the end of my dream? I mean... if it wasn't a vision of mine."

"So, they did refer to... Tiny and you and the others?" Diddy asked.

"Of course they did," Dixie replied, holding her expression. "They said it was the *Chimp Cirque* circus, I lived in that same one with my family when I was very little; they even mentioned Chunky who was a kid back then. Not to mention the diamonds and the emerald; I remember clearly that the owners of that circus gave my parents a few of those when we left that place. That means... that the tamers had already been looking for Tiny and me for a long time; they even wanted to take Kiddy. Those darn ones already knew us; they had been stalking us!"

"Geez, this is crazy," Melenky said. "Those tamers have really been such cruel monsters."

"So... that's what our dads hid so much from us," Rocky added seriously but still shocked. "That's why they didn't want to tell us anything! They actually... were slaves of those three monstrous men."

"That's why they never wanted to take us with them," Jemky added with the same expression. "And then, does that mean... that maybe our *real parents* were some of those slave apes too?"

"It can't be possible," Mandrew exclaimed quite seriously. "Then those three darn ones *must be in prison*, or in another case... not make it to the trial alive, as those people said."

"Well, it's the least they deserve," Diddy added in the same way. "They committed a lot of atrocities and who knows what else they could have done if they weren't stopped."

"But now they will pay," Dixie added firmly, before starting to smile little by little. "We made them pay!"

"And so it will be," Diddy said with a slight smile of victory, and the others did the same.

Suddenly, they heard murmurs and footsteps from people walking near where they were, so they hurried to go back outside where they were having lunch before. Immediately, all of them returned to their positions and pretended to be distracted.

"Ah, you've finished all your lunches," one of the people said, looking at them with a smile. "You can go to rest and then go to your playtime, little ones. Sorry for the delay, but we just got word that those evil circus tamers were defeated! And they'll never harm any creature anymore," they added in the same cheerful tone and as if they were explaining to little children... Even though everyone had already heard the full version.

The people picked up the trays where the kongs had eaten, and then began to take each one in their arms to carry them to the playground, even to Jenny's quartet. Later, they left them alone again.

"Let's see who gets to the top faster, what do you say?" Melenky told Diddy and Dixie along with the rest of the quartet.

"Alright, we bet we beat you," Diddy replied defiantly.

Everyone was going to start running to the platforms in the playground to climb. When suddenly, they realized that Jenny's quartet were also following them wherever they went.

"Let them join too," Rocky said, shrugging and then beckoning the other quartet.

Now the ten little kongs were the ones who ran and jumped around the playground as if they were in a park, obviously being quite careful with Jenny and company as far as falls are concerned. Anyway, it was not so bad a recreation time among all of them.

Chapter End Notes

Read the prologue in case you have not done so or did not understand the context back then.

Chapter 89: The Final Night

The evening hours had arrived, and the group of little kongs were back in their recovery room, each on their stretchers and with a particular doctor checking them. Only the children from Jenny's quartet were not present, as they had been moved to another room to stay. That same afternoon, everyone had been playing the rest of the day in the playground, so now they were somewhat exhausted.

Among other details, and even if they had had a recreation time, Dixie had not stopped thinking about the news they had heard that same afternoon. Now that they were in a quiet moment, she went deeper into her thoughts and remembered that dream she had where she had seen her parents and aunt and uncle. She remembered the last thing they had told her, something about how they had always tried to keep them safe from those circus tamers, and now... she had understood it, now she knew that actually they had always been in danger because of those tamers, and perhaps their parents never said anything to them so as not to scare them. Even so, things had unfolded as they did, and there was no turning back. However, what at least served as consolation to her was that now the group of tamers was going to *face the consequences*, which, indeed, with the confrontation they had almost two weeks ago, they had already made them pay quite a bit.

"It's time to sleep, little ones," one of the people said as they were leaving. Suddenly, one of them headed towards Diddy and Dixie. "By the way, you two, tomorrow will be your day to leave, so you can say goodbye to this place and... well, to your little friends if they are," they added, pointing to the quartet before continuing. "The vehicle will come tomorrow early in the morning and we'll take you to an island afterward in a boat. Behave well and don't be afraid, you'll be fine, okay?" they ended, giving them small pats on the head in a sweet way.

"Why do you give them so many explanations?" one of the people asked the other with a little laugh. "I don't think they understand."

"How could it not? I repeat, you can see that all these little ones are very intelligent," the first person replied in the same way.

Then, the people started to leave the room... but not before one of them returned back to Diddy and Dixie, and seemed to make sure that no one could hear.

"And another thing..." the same person whispered to Diddy and Dixie. "We will let you take your four mechanical friends, but only a few of us know it, okay?"

The person smiled at them and made a gesture of affirmation towards Diddy and Dixie, before also leaving the room and turning off the lights. Immediately, Diddy and Dixie looked at each other and smiled with a little excitement that they had finally managed to convince people to hand over Jenny's quartet. Now they would have to wait until the place where they are going to leave them does not look so complex to explore to find a route to Hurricane Island.

"So, you'll be leaving tomorrow, aren't you?" Mandrew asked them.

"Well, yes. Are you going to miss us?" Diddy replied jokingly.

"You wish," Rocky replied in the same tone before speaking to them normally. "Anyway, best of luck to you, monkeys. We still don't even know what we're going to do. The doctors even say

they're going to keep us here for months or years.”

"Hey, but after all, this place hasn't been so bad," Jemky said as they got ready to sleep. "I mean, at least those doctors have treated us well.”

"That's true," Melenky added in the same way. "They feed us well, they give us bubble baths, they let us play all day, and nobody bothers us... I just don't like it when they give us any medicine or give us any injection.”

"It hasn't been that bad, honestly," Mandrew said as he settled into his stretcher. "Although I don't want to stay here either... If they say they'll have us for so long with treatments, medications and I don't know what else, no.”

"It's true, I don't want to stay here that long either," Jemky added. "I wouldn't want to be stuck here for months or years without going out.”

"I hope we'll get out of here with our dads," Rocky added with a shrug. "Otherwise, I have no idea what we'll do... We have nothing else to do," he said, becoming more serious.

"But this time I *refuse* to be sent to another darn orphanage or shelter," Mandrew exclaimed firmly. "And I hope our dads won't leave us like that anymore once we are taken out of this place.”

"That's right, I don't want to go to any awful place again," Jemky added seriously, before looking down. "I just want to... Oh, I don't even know what to do after we leave this place.”

"You'll surely go find a new girlfriend as soon as we leave," Mandrew said in a mocking tone.

"Look, shut up," Jemky replied, looking disgusted this time. "I don't want to know anything about girls. I just... I'd just like those millipede candies again; I hope we'll find some of them," he added before sighing and looking into nothingness. "I just want those millipedes...”

"It's true, I want them too," Melenky added in the same way. "I want to try at least one; it's been a while since we've tried any.”

"Hey, but what are you saying?" Rocky exclaimed, looking at them seriously. "We're not going to get involved with those things anymore; they've been causing us serious harm, even the doctors here have said so.”

"How can we not continue to take them?" Jemky replied in the same way. "Of course, when the doctors take us out and we go to the place we go, we'll look for millipedes and a place where someone could sell those sweets. We can even prepare them by ourselves... And to heck with the damage they do to us; at least they always made us laugh.”

"Speak for yourselves, but I'm out," Rocky added, settling back into his stretcher. "All I want is... feeling good, but not that way either," he added before yawning and starting to close his eyes. "Huh, honestly... this life sucks, seriously.”

"And it's no lie," Jemky added, settling down to sleep too. "I don't even know why we had to exist first of all... But what can be done... Even those very doctors are saying that we're not going to continue living for so many years.”

"I really have no idea what we're going to do," Mandrew added in the same way, closing his eyes as well. "But we'll see later... Anyway, have a good rest everyone."

"Good night, sleep well," Rocky said in the same way along with the quartet. "And goodbye, Diddy and Dixie, in case I wake up late and I don't see you anymore," he told both from a distance.

"Good night," Diddy and Dixie said simultaneously as well. "And goodbye to you all too."

"We never want to see you anymore," Mandrew said jokingly from a distance and with his eyes closed.

"And neither do we," Dixie replied in the same tone.

Each of the little kongs finally closed their eyes, and settled on their respective stretchers so they could sleep. Diddy and Dixie's stretchers were far from those of the quartet; while in the early days both groups didn't like the idea of sleeping in the same room, they had at least proven tolerant.

The quartet seemed to have fallen asleep almost immediately until they emitted snores. Meanwhile, Diddy and Dixie, although they used to fall asleep quickly, this time they found themselves struggling to fall asleep; apparently, the idea of knowing that this would be their last night in that place, made them anxious, not so much for the fact of being so, but because their minds were invaded with the question of what could happen afterwards: if they would find Hurricane Island quickly or it would be so hard... or if they were to have any other inconvenience. The only thing that at least kept them calm was the fact that they would no longer have to worry about the tamers, since they had already been completely arrested and even almost convicted. They weren't even so worried about the evil apes or the quartet, because at least they knew that the people there were experts in controlling them and would be the ones who would take care of all of them from now on.

"Hey..." they heard a voice whispering to them closely and almost scaring them.

Diddy and Dixie opened their eyes in one fell swoop and turned to look at who was calling them at such late hours and in that sudden way. Upon looking around, they realized it was none other than Rocky, who was between both stretchers and then climbed onto the foot of Diddy's stretcher.

"What's going on?" Diddy asked, looking at him strangely along with Dixie.

"It's that... I wanted to talk to you," Rocky told them in a somewhat shy tone and in a low volume.

"Yeah? About what?" Dixie asked again.

"It's just that I wanted to tell you that..." Rocky told them as he scratched his head. "Well, that we're sorry."

"And that?" Diddy replied, looking at him more surprised.

"Well, that... Forgive us," Rocky added, showing some embarrassment like never before. "Forgive us for everything."

"That we... *forgive you*?" Dixie asked, looking at him with extreme strangeness at those sudden words.

"Yeah, yeah, that," Rocky replied, looking sideways, but at the same time trying to look serious. "I know you'll never be our friends, I know that, and don't think we're trying to make you be. Yeah, it

sounds like chutzpah, and my other three friends will never apologize, but... on behalf of the four of us, I do want to apologize... for everything we've done to you."

"Hey, wait, wait," Diddy replied quickly. "Are you serious? I mean... it's all over now," he added, shrugging.

"I know, but we're not going to see you again," Rocky replied, holding his expression. "And... I thought it wouldn't be a bad idea to apologize to you. Don't answer if you want, but... sometimes I've thought that you two are really nice, you might even have been good friends with us. I remember what Diddy was like being our friend and how you two were like with us when we were the Jennies... You were never bad... something that we have been. Even... I feel that you two have understood us better than anyone else in these last few days."

A few seconds passed, until Diddy placed a hand on Rocky's shoulder and patted him lightly.

"Hey, it's okay, you don't have to apologize," Diddy said in a calm tone. "I mean, we understand now why you four have become what you are, and well... it's up to all of you to change and even correct your attitudes in time... And seriously, I hope you succeed, and maybe being here is your chance."

"And you can still achieve it," Dixie added in the same way. "And do it for yourselves... before it's too late."

"Yeah... I suppose so... And well, I really thank you so much..." Rocky replied with a slight smile, "for at least understanding it... And again, in case I don't see you tomorrow... take care, seriously."

Rocky made a goodbye gesture to them, before Diddy and Dixie returned the same gesture. Afterwards, Rocky returned to his stretcher and settled back into sleep.

Diddy and Dixie stared at him and the quartet for a few seconds, and then looked at each other and shrugged while smiling lightly. Afterwards, they both settled back into their stretchers and closed their eyes to fall asleep again.

Chapter 90: Farewell at Dawn

Chapter Notes

Extensive chapter.

The wee hours had passed, and everything seemed to have gone well. Diddy and Dixie were immersed in a deep sleep, while between times they settled themselves on their respective stretchers.

Later, and perhaps reaching a phase of light sleep, a sudden noise reached the ears of Diddy, who at first did not take it seriously, before it sounded again. Diddy, with half-open eyes, turned to settle again, when suddenly, he could hear footsteps echoing in the corridors outside, accompanied by a few murmurs. Diddy would think it was the people walking the corridors... if not because when he looked towards the windows, he realized that the sky was still dark. He got up immediately and, to his surprise, caught sight that the door to the room was half-opened. As if that wasn't enough, he turned to look around the room, and what he saw only fueled his suspicions: the quartet's stretchers were all *empty*.

Suddenly, Dixie was beginning to show light sleep movements, to which Diddy hurriedly called her by waving an arm.

"Dixie," he whispered as he also looked at the door. "*Wake up, wake up.*"

"Hmm... What... What's going on?" Dixie replied, trying to open her eyes.

"Do you hear that?" Diddy whispered again.

Dixie, still struggling to keep her eyes open and getting up a little, stopped to listen to Diddy and what he mentioned.

"What?" Dixie asked as she forcibly got up.

Suddenly, Dixie also heard footsteps echoing down the corridor. Afterwards, Diddy pointed to the door and then to the quartet's empty stretchers, which made Dixie finish waking up and react better. Immediately, she was also alert to the strange details that were there. They would think that maybe the people took the quartet to carry out any examination on them, but it was strange that it was at such hours.

Diddy beckoned Dixie to go to peek out the door to inspect, to which she nodded. They both got off their stretchers and headed for the door, poking only their heads out to look around.

At first nothing could be seen, however, the footsteps kept echoing... When suddenly, small silhouettes were seen in one of the perpendicular corridors, and belonged to no one but *Jemky and company*. Diddy and Dixie looked at each other with suspicious faces and then looked back at the quartet, who continued walking quickly down that corridor until they were out of sight.

"What are they doing?" Dixie asked with a suspicious look. "Aren't they sleepwalking or something?"

"I have no idea. But something is starting to give me a bad feeling," Diddy said with a look of seriousness.

They both did not know what the four of them would be doing, since in none of the previous days had it happened that they got up like that so suddenly.

"I think we should go spy on them," Diddy whispered.

Dixie nodded, and then both of them walked out of the room, adjusting the door stealthily. Then, they started walking down that corridor, making sure that no one came or made so much noise.

"They went over there," Diddy pointed to a direction in the next corridor.

Both continued to follow in the quartet's footsteps. While they never stopped being attentive to the behavior of the four, they also didn't want to think anything bad about them.

"*There they are*," Dixie exclaimed quietly, pointing to a corner.

The quartet was clearly seen now... The four also seemed to be making sure no one was around, and they seemed quite awake to be sleepwalking. Diddy and Dixie continued to watch them from the pot of a plant in that corridor. They caught sight that the quartet was carrying what appeared to be dark jars containing a *liquid*.

"They're plotting something," Diddy whispered firmly, becoming more alert.

"Come on, *let's follow them*," Dixie exclaimed in the same tone.

Diddy and Dixie set out to follow them no matter what, because with the demeanor the four of them had and those objects, it couldn't be perceived they would be up to anything good. Later, the quartet arrived at a window, which they began to open stealthily while muttering something. Diddy and Dixie rushed to the corner closest to that window, enough to hide and hear them from there.

"No, don't worry," Rocky was heard whispering to his group. "Those two monkeys are not even going to notice; they're very asleep."

"That's why I even told them we never wanted to see them again," Mandrew added in a mocking tone.

Diddy and Dixie became more alert when they heard those words, because it did not seem to point to anything good.

Suddenly, the quartet began to exit through that window while holding on the edges. Seconds later, each one started to jump from that window, not downwards, but rather sideways.

"What?" Dixie whispered with a look of strangeness.

"Come on, let's see where they go," Diddy whispered, hurriedly grabbing Dixie's arm.

Both went to look out of that window quickly but stealthily to see where the quartet had gone... To their surprise, the four of them were jumping and climbing out the windows next to them, one after

the other, until they reached *a specific window*.

"I think we should go follow them," Dixie whispered hurriedly.

Diddy, even if he was nervous about moving like that, agreed to follow in their footsteps anyway. Both of them hurriedly jumped up and grabbed onto the windows that the four kids had traversed, and accelerated the movement when they saw them entering through one of them.

"I say we catch them with their hands up, no matter what." Diddy said firmly, and Dixie nodded immediately.

Both managed to reach the last window and entered. The room to which it belonged was all dark but, even in that scant vision, they identified the silhouettes of the quartet. Diddy and Dixie, without letting any more time pass, pounced on some of them, managing to catch them.

"*But what the heck?!*" Jemky was heard exclaiming at the moment Diddy caught him.

Diddy and Dixie hurried to grab the jars carried by the quartet, shortly before the light in that room turned on.

"*Hey, give us that!*" Mandrew exclaimed, trying to pounce on Diddy and Dixie, but they managed to dodge them all.

"*Give us that, monkeys; that's not yours!*" Rocky exclaimed in the same way. "*What's wrong with you?!*"

"*So, you think you're so clever, huh?*" Diddy replied as he continued to dodge them with two of the jars in hand.

"*What are you up to now?!*" Dixie added as she dodged them with two other jars.

"*Give us that; that's from our dads!*" Melenky replied, trying to pounce on them.

Both groups continued to fight for those dark jars, which contained liquids. Diddy and Dixie fled from the quartet while they tried to pounce on them and even block their way so that they did not leave through the door or the window.

"*Bring that here, darn it!*" Mandrew ordered.

"*Not until you tell us what you're up to!*" Diddy replied.

"*WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?!*" an additional deep voice in that room exclaimed suddenly.

When they turned to look, Diddy and Dixie noticed some stretchers that were there, and on which were none other than the *mandrills and the lead orangutan*, sitting and with hardened looks.

"Look at those two monkeys!" Jemky exclaimed to the apes, pointing to Diddy and Dixie. "They don't want to give us your medicines!"

"Medicines?" Diddy and Dixie exclaimed in unison looking at the jars.

"Yeah, medicines that our dads asked us for!" Rocky replied firmly. "So they can get up!"

"Give them back here!" Jemky ordered them, trying to pounce on the two, but they kept putting up resistance.

"No, you're up to something!" Dixie replied, climbing onto an empty stretcher nearby.

"No one takes medicine in high doses!" Diddy added in the same way as he climbed onto the stretcher.

"Look, Dad! They don't want to give them back to us!" Melenky said, climbing onto his father's stretcher and shaking his arm, before the other three kids did the same.

"You're trying to do something!" Diddy replied, still on the defensive.

"Alright, brat monkeys, GIVE THAT BACK!" the lead orangutan ordered Diddy and Dixie, though for some reason, those apes wouldn't stand up. *"That's ours!"*

"No, and tell us if you're plotting any evil plan!" Dixie replied firmly.

"We're NOT plotting anything, darn it!" one of the mandrills shouted at them. *"Those medicines are for putting us to sleep!"*

"What?!" the four children exclaimed simultaneously, looking strangely at their dads.

"Weren't they so you could get up?" Melenky asked them.

"Uhh, no... I mean..." the lead orangutan replied in a slow voice, but changed his expression immediately. "Listen, just give us those jars; take them away from those two monkeys."

"But what do you mean they're for sleeping?" Rocky asked them again with a look of weirdness along with the group. "Is that why you wanted us to bring you that medicine? Didn't you rest well or how?"

"Do you have insomnia or what?" Mandrew asked them in the same way. "It's almost dawn."

The mandrills and the lead orangutan seemed to be somewhat serious and nervous at the same time, as they looked at each other. Their expressions seemed somewhat strange even for Diddy and Dixie... In fact, it was very strange that those apes did not even want to stand up as would be expected of them.

"Listen, just take those jars from those two," one of the mandrills ordered. "Give us that and that's it."

But the quartet, as if they already knew those expressions, seemed to have doubts about it.

"Wait, but why did you tell us that they're for sleeping just now?" Jemky asked them again, still looking at them strangely. "Or are you really up to something?"

"No! And just bring us those jars!" the lead orangutan replied. "Don't keep asking!"

"You're hiding something from us, I know you," Rocky pointed at them with a suspicious look. "Tell us *what it is*."

The quartet continued to press their dads for an explanation, while the adult apes only tried to dodge them. Something that seemed quite strange to Diddy and Dixie... were the expressions that these apes had; they always saw them as quite rough and intimidating, but this time it seemed to be different... This time, the apes looked tired and as if they were in no mood to get up. First of all, Diddy and Dixie should be afraid of having those apes in front of them because of the events that occurred before, but they didn't even seem to want to fight them or something as expected.

"Boys, please," one of the mandrills said quite seriously. "Just bring us those jars."

"But tell us!" Jemky replied. "Why are you getting like this?"

"Okay, that medicine is actually for sleeping!" the lead orangutan exclaimed, creating a moment of silence.

"And couldn't you tell us that before?" Rocky replied with a shrug along with the other three kids. "And seriously tough, if you want to sleep you can just sleep anyway, or do you really have insomnia?"

"It's that... it's for sleeping, but..." the lead orangutan replied, showing absolute seriousness, "it's for sleeping *forever*."

"What?!" the four children exclaimed consecutively, making an expression of extreme strangeness.

"Just take those jars from those brat monkeys!" the lead orangutan ordered them again more rudely.

"No, no, no, wait a minute!" Rocky replied still with the same expression. "What do you mean by sleeping forever?! Is it for-"

"Well, yes... *It's that*," the brown-lapel mandrill replied.

"Hey, what?! And why is that?!" Jemky exclaimed, demanding an explanation along with the other three kids.

"We're going to explain to you! But first we want the jars!"

Suddenly, the group of apes tried to get up as if they wanted to go towards Diddy and Dixie, but immediately, the quartet rushed to stop them while continuing to demand an explanation for their sudden and crude answer. On the other hand, Diddy and Dixie were completely confused by that too.

"Hey, *wait a minute!*" Rocky exclaimed to the apes. "What do you mean by sleeping forever? Is that medicine... poison?!"

"It's no poison!" the blue-lapel mandrill replied. "It's just for falling asleep... But one never wakes up anymore."

"Do you want to... kill us?" Melenky exclaimed, looking at the apes quite confused.

"No, of course not!" the red-lapel mandrill replied, before pausing. "Not to you. You're going to stay here."

"Let's see! I think we have to speak clearly to them," the lead orangutan interrupted firmly toward the other adult apes.

Suddenly, there was another moment of silence as the group of apes remained with absolute seriousness. The quartet continued to look at their dads with extreme confusion, even showing some uncertainty. Meanwhile, Diddy and Dixie, though they had let their guard down, remained tense at the scene. Then, the lead orangutan gave a sigh before speaking.

"Look, kids... We just want you to promise us something," the orangutan said, looking at them seriously. "You're going to stay here; you're going to behave well and try to do things right from now on; I know that those doctors will know how to take care of you... I assume you've already heard what happened: those three circus tamers will be jailed and sentenced, and they're even at high risk of dying; their lives as they were have crumbled... and ours are also over."

"Wait, wait, wait!" Jemky interrupted quickly. "W-what are you telling us?"

"We just want you guys to keep going," the lead orangutan interrupted, holding Jemky's arms. "You'll be fine in this place, trust us. Promise us you'll do your part, don't worry about us."

"What?! W-what are you saying?!" Jemky replied, pushing his arms away in one fell swoop. "Did you want that medicine for?"

"Wait, no, listen to us!" the orangutan interrupted again, taking him by the arms. "We just want you guys to be okay, and this place is where you'll be best off... And I know you'll achieve it, even without us."

"Hey, no, no, no!" Rocky replied firmly. "What is this all about?! You told us to bring you those medicines to recover and then we all would escape from here! Did it turn out that you actually wanted-"

"L-look, guys!" the brown-lapel mandrill interrupted. "We don't want you to take it that way... We're not going to live for that long anyway, did you know that? Even the doctors told us we're not going to recover anymore! I think you didn't know that."

"*What?!*" Mandrew exclaimed with a more shocked look along with the other three kids. "How could it not? We even gave you some of that sapphire elixir too!"

"That's exactly what's harming us!" the blue-lapel mandrill replied. "I don't know if you've heard it too, but We've been cured throughout our *whole* lives with that sapphire mixture, and that's actually really bad in excess!... And now it seems the consequences have caught up with us; why do you think we can't even get up? In addition... believe it or not, we won't last much longer."

"Besides, it's not just that, kids," the lead orangutan added, looking at them quite seriously and taking a breath to continue. "The people are going to... *put us to sleep* in a few days."

"*What are you saying?!*" the four of them exclaimed, all showing shock.

"Yeah, just as you heard!" the lead orangutan exclaimed again. "All those people already know that we have committed hundreds of crimes, and they'll take that action in that regard."

"But what are you telling us?!" Rocky exclaimed with a look of weirdness. "How are they going to... put you to sleep?!"

"Well, yeah, they will," the brown-lapel mandrill replied. "Those people said that we are beyond redemption, that we can't change who we are anymore... And they're right! We... we don't have a

way to change anymore, this is who we already are. So... they'll do that to us: they're going to end our lives, and if not, our lives will end in agony anyway. What's more... your uncle Will was taken to another room because... you could suppose what happened to him."

The children of the quartet made an expression of deep shock, as if they had been given a sudden blow that they did not expect. They even began to look at them with some disappointment.

"Hey... y-you hadn't told us that," Melenky replied as the four children were more shocked at that revelation. Suddenly, Melenky gave a more hardened look with indignation, before hitting the stretcher twice. *"Why didn't you tell us that before?! Why do you always hide things from us?! Why are you like this?!"*

"You want to leave us alone here!" Jemky shouted in the same way. "Is that what you want?!"

"You're not going to be left alone; those doctors will take care of you!" the lead orangutan replied.

"No!" Rocky interrupted firmly. "At least I don't want to stay here forever. You can't leave us here! *You can't leave like this! You can't die!"*

"Or take us with you!" Melenky exclaimed in a hurried way, even causing the other three kids to say the same thing.

"No, of course not! Don't say that!" the red-lapel mandrill replied. *"Don't say that, please!... Just... You just have to understand... our lives are over, and it'll be in vain and even worse to keep waiting for our passing."*

"Always hiding everything from us," Melenky told them quietly at first, but raised the voice later. *"You always hide everything from us!... Even when we were babies! You never told us that you were actually servants of those tamers, and that was why you always had to leave and leave us alone."*

The group of mandrills and orangutans fell silent for a few seconds as they looked extremely seriously at their kong children. They all looked at each other with expressions as if they didn't know what else to say... Suddenly, Melenky began to emit light sobs that then turned into continuous tears falling down from his eyes.

"Hey... is that true?" Rocky asked them in a calmer tone, but with absolute seriousness. "Were you... slaves of those tamers? Is that t-true?"

The adult apes remained silent for a while longer, while showing expressions that denoted a certain anguish; they had never been seen like this.

"Uhh... yes," the lead orangutan replied with a low look. "I guess you've heard that too... And that's been almost our whole life."

"So... was it because of that?" Rocky uttered with almost the same expression as the adult apes. "Is that why you never wanted to tell us anything about why you went to work and why you left us so alone?"

"Yes..." the brown-lapel mandrill replied slowly and with an empty tone.

"And why didn't you tell us before?" Jemky, whose eyes were also beginning to get moistened. "You could have explained it and not filled us with lies as always."

"And how were we going to tell you?" the lead orangutan said. "You four were too little to understand all that and we didn't want you to see those things we did with animals."

The four kong children continued to look at their dads with absolute seriousness; they were again having those expressions of helpless children that rarely showed on them.

"But you really couldn't at least tell us something before?" Rocky asked them with the same look. "And what about us? Where do we come from?... How did you live under the orders of those tamers?... Tell us now then."

The older apes were still staring down. They seemed to want to burst, but at the same time, as if trying to force themselves to stay firm.

"Uh, you see... We were so little," the lead orangutan said, still staring down, "when those three darned ones, who in fact, were five ones back then, adopted us... as their children. Some of us remember being taken from our parents in the jungles, and ever since... those men have raised us, and they have also trained us. And it wasn't just the five of us; we were *a bunch of apes of various species* in that group, who over time ceased to exist. Since we were little, we were taught... to hunt and kill animals, to use guns, to do so many procedures with their corpses, that we even saw it normal during our youth."

"What are you saying?" the four children exclaimed simultaneously and with astonishment.

"Those men treated us as their children in our early years; they even showed us affection. But over time... they treated us more as slaves. They trained us with beatings, lashes and a lot of torture that I couldn't even tell you. If we didn't take animals to them in time... they punished us until we were almost dead. Those who rebelled or tried to escape... were exterminated. The live animals that we hunted were left for their circus or zoo, while the dead ones... were used to sell in various ways and for various purposes."

"Many of our fellow apes died at the hands of those darned ones; there were fewer and fewer left, since there were many who could not stand that life and rebelled. Honestly... all of them were stronger than us, since instead we never had any courage to try to escape or anything... We could never escape because they always had us tracked... until recently we gave them their big comeuppance."

"When we were older, in the middle of our journeys, we began to have love affairs... and many of us had our wives... and even our children. Some abandoned their new families, but others like us did take them to live with us. Those tamers didn't like the idea, but they let us have our families with us, albeit on the condition that both our wives and our children served them too. At first, we accepted the deal... But over time, none of us could stand our families receiving the same cruel treatment they gave us, and many of us began to rebel... but those darned ones just exterminated them, even our wives... They even took the life of our children, still babies!"

The group of apes paused before continuing, as they made an expression of deep indignation with their eyes lowered, as if they wanted to burst into anger, but trying to restrain it.

"Those darned ones wiped out all *our families*; it was a time of mass slaughter. Barely about fifteen apes remained, of which the five of us were the last. And you four... were the last remaining babies.

The tamer bosses were very busy at that moment, so they ordered us to... kill you... But we couldn't! Just seeing you four so small and helpless made us see our deceased children that we had. So, we just went to hide you far away, on one of our hunting journeys, to make the bosses believe that you were already dead."

"We intended to abandon you to your fate... But for some reason, we didn't have the heart to do it either. So, we decided to adopt you four secretly, and we kept you in the hidden building of that islet, and we hid you when the bosses went to visit us. It was very difficult to keep you, but at least we had you safe. But when you got a little older, we could no longer keep you there, and that's why we sent you to that orphanage we found. And then in that shelter... And then at Kong Kollege on DK Island... I know we weren't present dads, but at least we didn't want those tamers to know about you."

"Those tamers were five ones... until that time where they were going to catch two chimpanzee girls and a baby gorilla boy whom they had been shadowing for a long time. But because of one of the adult apes that was there, they had an accident where two of them died, and another lost a leg. The other two that remained were attacked by a tiger and a bear each. They were crippled and weaker, and they only had the five of us... And as a result, they began to get stricter and stricter and demanded us to bring many more animals in less time... And that's when we ourselves started recruiting more apes, without the bosses knowing, and we captured entire families of animals to take to the bosses."

"But... a pair of apes, who were Dixie Kong's aunt and uncle, organized with the other animals and confronted most of our recruits until only the five of us remained again. All of them escaped and we barely took revenge on those two, and we were looking for Dixie and her siblings as best we could, since they left us *with nothing to take to the bosses*. And it was then that those tamers undertook the plan of mechanizing little primates... A plan that, in fact, they already had for a long time. They asked us to find and capture four chimpanzee children to start with the plan and, with the supervision of those men, we did that... And we were going to do the same with those other children that we asked you to capture; they wanted an army of them to train them to be *their animal hunters*. They chose *children* for their agility and endurance with the procedure and for their innocent appearance that no one would suspect. And if things worked... they planned to apply the same procedure with adult apes in the future."

"And we don't know why, but... we believe that after having all those kids mechanized... those tamers were going to get rid of us, and we were going to die anyway; they no longer wanted to need or take care of us."

The apes remained silent, this time without continuing anything else, implying that they had finished explaining their story; a story they had never told their own children... or rather, adopted children.

The quartet were perplexed by all that story, lowering their gazes and looking pensive, as if something had unexpectedly impacted them.

"But now..." the lead orangutan said in the same tone, "that's over... That whole organization has just been destroyed. There are even many like them in other cities, but they'll fall down too. None of those darn tamers... ever harm anyone again."

"So... that was why," Rocky said with a look of seriousness. "Did you just try to keep us hidden? Is that so?"

The adult apes did not answer, but nodded their heads slightly and still with their serious expressions.

"But anyway..." Jemky added with the same expression, "you could have told us that and at least we would have understood it a little."

"It was not going to be easy to explain this to you," one of the mandrills replied. "What's more, even with the emerald you brought us, it was hard for us to have to tell you that we had done that mechanization to those children that you call the *Jennies*. It was hard for us to have to tell you that we didn't hunt giant monsters, but animals!"

The children from the quartet just continued to look at their dads with a seriousness, and even with a few tears in their eyes.

"But well... It's all over," the lead orangutan said, heaving a sigh. "Nothing remains, and now we just have to wait for *our time*, which won't be long," he added before looking again at the four kong children. "So, guys, you're going to stay here, the doctors will do you a good job by really correcting you, and you're going to be able to rebuild your liv-"

"No!" Jemky interrupted quickly, before pausing. "*I'm not going to stay in this place for that long! Much less without you!*"

"Me neither!" Mandrew added in the same way. "We don't want you to leave us anymore! You told us we'd escape all together now!"

"No, wait, wait!" the lead orangutan replied firmly. "In this place, they'll have you very well, they'll know how to take care of you and they'll give you all the attention that we never were able to give you; you'll be better off here than with us. We no longer have any reason to go on."

"And what about us?!" Melenky replied.

"You're going to stay here!" the red-lapel mandrill replied. "We don't have much time left; you are still kids and you can hold out longer. But you need to correct your behavior so much, and that's why you must be in this place."

"But why?!" Rocky replied. "How do you know that here they'll continue to have us well?!"

"Because... we have been in this place before," the lead orangutan replied, with a hardened look. "We had the opportunity to rebuild our lives... but we didn't take advantage of it."

"What?!" Rocky exclaimed, looking at them strangely along with the group. "How's that? What are you talking about?"

"So long ago..." the orangutan replied, "on one of our journeys we had a fatal accident too, and some people brought us here to recover, but our bosses didn't know of our whereabouts... We had a *specific gorilla fellow* back then, who had proposed that we stay here, since our bosses could never take us out easily from this place, and so we could rehabilitate ourselves once and for all... And do you know who that gorilla was?... It was your teacher: Pinky!"

Both the quartet and Diddy and Dixie, who were also listening to everything, were speechless and with expressions of shock at that unexpected fact.

"W-what?" the quartet exclaimed consecutively, looking at each other. "W-what did you say? The... Mr..."

"*Pinky*," the lead orangutan repeated, finishing the sentence.

"*What?*" Diddy whispered as he looked at Dixie with the same expression, and both with blank minds... Both of them even felt a little internal acceleration at that.

"Pinky... was also one of us," one of the mandrills added, "under the orders of those tamers. He was bought from another circus when he was very little. His fur was pink and that's why they called him that; that's what he told us. He was one of the first servant apes of the tamers, so he was one of the oldest."

"Is it... serious?" Jemky asked again along with the group, still not recovering from the shock. "And... did he also... *kill any animal?*"

"*Yes...*" the orangutan replied before continuing. "Indeed... he did too; he was forced to commit such acts too, but on very few occasions. Because the difference... was that he always tried *not* to obey the orders of the bosses; he was always the one who even *helped* the kidnapped animals to escape... and the one who always proposed to us to escape, but nobody really wanted to listen to him."

On their part, Diddy and Dixie felt they had run out of air; they already knew that Mr. Pinky would have had something to do with those apes... but the last thing they would have expected is that he had also been part of that group, even if they now knew that everything was by force and under the macabre orders of those tamers.

"But one day, long before you were born and when there were still more apes..." the orangutan continued, "we had a serious accident, and some doctors like the ones here brought us; they did the same activities that they have done to us now... And the truth is that it wasn't that bad. But even with all that, we still feared our bosses more than anything, and we knew that at any moment they'd come looking for us secretly and heal us just with the sapphire elixir as usual."

"And so it was; those Messrs. Owens came looking for us and warned us to get out of here, and that if we didn't, they'd kill us. And that's when Pinky proposed to ignore them and stay... but we told him he was crazy, and he even forced us to stay longer, until our bosses came looking for us again. We didn't go along and decided to go with our bosses, but Pinky... stayed and betrayed us. Our bosses even punished us because they thought Pinky was dead... but actually he just disassociated himself from us and accepted the doctors' treatments."

"Long after, we ran into Pinky again... We saw him so changed and now become a teacher and with a new life... But we just wanted to take revenge on him for betraying us, and we were following him for so long to make him pay... until now that we were about to mechanize him so that later he would stay with the bosses *for life and after dying*... But even so... he succeeded; he really managed to escape from the bosses, he managed to escape from this enslaved life, and on top of that he was left alive! Something none of us could do, even if we had the chance."

The kids from the quartet had a little heavy breathing, at the same time they were still speechless at that latest revelation. On the other hand, Diddy and Dixie ended up being extremely shocked with all that story; they felt they couldn't take it anymore if they revealed some other unexpected fact. The minds of both of them began to recall various memories about Mr. Pinky.

"And that's why, boys..." the lead orangutan said, taking Jemky by the arms, while each of the other mandrills did the same with their respective adopted sons, "you must stay here; do it for your sake... Otherwise, in your future-"

"*No! No and no!*" Jemky interrupted, becoming defensive again and breathing heavily. "We won't stay without you! Who is going to defend us if someone does something bad to us?!"

"The doctors won't do you any harm here!" the orangutan replied. "We already told you that you're going to reform well here!"

"But what about you?!" Melenky replied, who had tears rolling down his face, "We won't be without you; we want *you* to take care of us!... It's what we always wanted and you never could really do it."

Melenky began to breathe heavily, while his tears continued to roll nonstop. Suddenly, the other three kong children lowered their gazes and began to emit light sobs and tears too, this time without stopping. The adult apes were kept pretty seriously, but even so... they showed some compassion as they looked at their children that way.

"Uh, kids..." the lead orangutan pronounced, this time caressing Jemky's head while he was in tears now, as were the other three children. "You have to understand... This place will be the best for you... and you must continue without us," he added, speaking calmly. "If you don't do it... you may become *criminals* when you grow up, just like us... even much worse. You're in the last stage of your childhood, and when you're grown up... it'll be too late; your future will be ruined, and *everyone* is only going to reject you, despise you, even hurt you again."

"You just have to do your part," the brown-lapel mandrill added, who was doing the same with Rocky. "Do it for yourselves... as did your teacher Pinky. And that is because he managed to reform because he was never really evil. So-"

"*No!*" Rocky interrupted through tears, before pointing at them. "*The same thing Melenky said!* We don't want you to abandon us anymore! And if you say so much that you no longer have reason to live, why don't you stay with us for another while?! Even if you have little time left!"

"Boys, we've already told you we're *not* going to recover," the blue-lapel mandrill replied.

"Those are *excuses!*" Mandrew replied in the same way. "*You just want to leave us to our fate as always!*"

"Hey, we're not saying that!" the lead orangutan replied.

"*Yeah, you are!*" Jemky replied. "As always... you want to leave us to our fate!" he added before uttering another sob. "Just like you have left us since we were little... You wanted to protect us so much from those tamers, but anyway, other apes did awful things to us! Like in that dreadful orphanage."

Every word the quartet told the apes seemed to cause a direct blow to them, which was noticeable in the moments when they hardened their eyes as if it were hurting. Meanwhile, the quartet were submerged in tears as they had never been seen before, even more than in previous days.

"You know?" Rocky said, wiping his eyes and looking indignant. "You would have better let those tamers *kill us when we were babies*, or you would have done it yourself!"

"Hey! Don't say that, boy!" the brown-lapel mandrill exclaimed, raising his voice.

"And it's true! It wouldn't have been a bad idea after all!" Jemky added in the same way. "What's more, why didn't you do it if you couldn't even take care of us?"

"Because we didn't have the courage to do it!" the lead orangutan replied, now looking annoyed. "How do you think we were going to kill you four when you were so little?!"

"Well, I wasn't even going to notice!" Jemky replied. "We wouldn't have even known!"

"Yeah, we wouldn't even be here!" Melenky added in the same way. "We wouldn't have had to go through so many awful things! We wouldn't even exist!"

There was a pause among everyone, while the quartet just kept shedding tears while wiping them. Meanwhile, the apes even lowered their gazes and seemed to want to break down too, but they tried to restrain themselves.

"Or you know what?" Mandrew said in a calmer, but serious tone. "And I don't know about the others, but... if you plan to drink from that jar," he added, staring at the apes before continuing, "I want to do it too. I'll leave with you."

"No, what are you saying?!" the mandrill in blue replied. "Don't even think we'll allow you—"

"No!" Jemky interrupted, still in tears. "Thinking about it, it's not a bad idea. I'll leave with you too."

"Me too!" Melenky added in the same way.

"And I will too, honestly!" Rocky exclaimed. "After all... we don't have reason to continue either."

"No, for heaven's sake!" the lead orangutan exclaimed, raising his voice. *"Don't say that!"*

"Yeah! You heard us now!" Jemky replied in the same tone. *"So, we're going with you too!..."* After all, that's what those tamers were going to do with us. What's more, the doctors said we're not going to live for so many years either!"

"We said no!" the orangutan replied quickly. "You guys have yet to live! You still have time to live, and a life to improve on!"

"What life?!" Melenky added, raising his voice. "If we don't even know what will become of us after all this! What will we do after those doctors take us back to the jungle?! Going on with our miserable lives in the same way?!"

The quartet just continued to shed tears as they kept looking at their dads. The apes looked with exhausted patience, but much more as if they were holding back on showing themselves weak. Later, they began to extend their arms so that they could each hug their respective children. The four children stood still as they only let their tears out and, seconds later, they also hugged their respective dads in the middle of their crying.

Suddenly, Jemky looked up at his father, as if taking strength to speak to him.

"Dad..." he said, his eyes all teary. "Take us with you... please... We really don't know what to do after we're released from here... And anyway... our end could also be in this place in a few years."

"We don't know what other path to take," Melenky added as he remained in his father's arms.
"We're only going to go in search of our well-being... and we no longer know where to find it."

Then, Rocky looked up too and separated for a while from his father. He took a breath before speaking, as if trying to take some strength.

"And I want to ask you something..." Rocky said, keeping his expression. "Why did our real parents decide to have us... if they weren't going to be able to keep us well?... Even they could not survive! Not even you have been able to deal with us."

The group of apes once again made that expression of hardening their gaze, before answering.

"Because they really..." the brown-lapel mandrill said, "didn't think. None of us thought... that our lives were not for forming families; we didn't take into account that we lived with so many risks... When we fell in love, love blinded us with so much intensity that we didn't think about the consequences; besides... some of us didn't even know we would have babies."

The quartet was silent for a while longer, before Rocky spoke again as he hardened his gaze with tears in his eyes.

"I see..." Rocky said before heaving a sigh. "So... take us with you, seriously."

"B-but no, boy!" the mandrill replied to Rocky quickly. "We're not going to-"

"No, do it!" Jemky interrupted, separating from his father as well, his eyes moistened. "Let's do it..."

"But what-"

Melenky interrupted his father by taking his arm, before he also tried to oppose it.

"We're serious..." Melenky told them in a calmer tone, but still with seriousness and teary eyes.
"Let's leave together... We're not going to live either, only to *survive*... as we always have."

The group of apes still had hardened looks, but a few seconds later, one of the mandrills shed a tear even if they tried to contain themselves. Suddenly, between the four of them they looked at each other with empty expressions, and then they looked at their children, who also had dull looks and wiped their eyes at every moment. A while later, the lead orangutan nodded his head, being accompanied by the other apes with the same.

Suddenly, the lead orangutan stretched out his head and looked at Diddy and Dixie. Both had been left with empty expressions and at the same time with some distress after seeing that unexpected and heartbreaking scene. Although those they were seeing were their archenemies together, they never imagined seeing them that way. Then, the orangutan stretched out his arm towards both little kongs.

"The jars... please," the orangutan said in earnestness, extending his hand.

Both the adult and the children apes turned to look at Diddy and Dixie as well, showing their low expressions towards them. Even the children from the quartet lowered their gazes again, as if they didn't even care that their two archenemies were watching them in such a situation.

"Please," the lead orangutan repeated to both.

Diddy and Dixie just started trembling as they looked at the whole group, while also turning their gazes towards the jars as well. Thousands of thoughts flashed through their minds after hearing everything the apes and the quartet had said.

"Hand them over, please!" the orangutan repeated again, raising his voice a little. "You won't be guilty of anything, just hand them over to us."

But Diddy and Dixie continued to make expressions of uncertainty, and even as if they wanted to refuse to hand them the jars.

"Hand them over, monkeys," Jemky said too, without looking at them along with the group.

Diddy and Dixie looked at each other, while still trembling and the jars sounded as they clashed a little by accident. But there was really no alternative, so they began to take a few steps forward and reach the stretcher of the apes, although they were still hesitant to hand over the jars.

"The people will take you to Sunflower Island, right?" the lead orangutan asked suddenly, to which Diddy and Dixie nodded lightly. "When you arrive, you'll surely find a path... Just walk through it, and at the end on your right you'll see Hurricane Island in the distance."

Diddy and Dixie made an expression of strangeness at that indication, and even wondered if there was something planned behind everything, although that no longer seemed to be possible.

"And you still have that emerald, don't you?" the orangutan asked them again. "The same mixture you used on those mechanical children; that same one can restore the memory of the other kids. Sapphires can be found in any underground cave on Hurricane Island, and you can use normal water. Just rub that mixture on their heads, and that's all... Well, I gave you that information in exchange. Now! The jars," he added, extending his hand again.

Diddy and Dixie made another expression, trying to "protect" the jars, while still trembling.

"For the last time," the lead orangutan said, staring at them. "Just... let us rest... Don't ruin our chance to rest too."

Both little kongs looked at each other once more with all the doubts they had at that moment, until seconds later, and even if their hands trembled, they went towards them completely and extended their arms for them to take the jars. The lead orangutan, with both hands, took the four jars, then was helped by the mandrills until each jar was in the hands of each ape.

"Uhh... that won't hurt, right?" Melenky asked suddenly, pointing to the jars.

"Well..." the lead orangutan replied, holding a jar of medicine. "Only at first it'll hurt... It'll destroy and burn you inside, but afterwards... the pain will fade, and it'll just make you sleepy... until you fall asleep."

As soon as the ape finished his answer, he brought the jar to his mouth and drank from it. Afterwards, the rest of the apes did the same and, after that, they gave the jars to the four children, who at first smelled and observed that liquid with doubts, but as soon as the first of them did it... the others drank too until all the jars were empty, even without showing displeasure at the taste.

Diddy and Dixie just stared at the scene while they couldn't deny that they felt a little guilty, despite remembering that it was something that would happen if they hadn't bothered to get up to spy on

the quartet. Suddenly, they received another stare from the lead orangutan.

"You," he said in all seriousness. "Get out of here... before the doctors come and blame you for us."

Diddy and Dixie received one last empty look from the quartet... Without both of them wanting to, their minds recalled everything the four of them had told them about their lives, and everything they had answered after listening to them; they could not deny that the four were the ones who gave them the most pity, especially at that time, where the four were shown as helpless children more than ever... But they also knew that nothing could be done for them anymore. Afterwards, without saying anything else, Diddy and Dixie got off the stretchers and ran to the door, stopping at it to turn to look one last time at the entire ape group, where the adult apes were now hugging their respective children, this time without letting go. Without saying more, Diddy and Dixie withdrew from the area and ran away from there as best they could.

Later, the two little kongs had reached the corridor where their recovery room was. But just then, they spotted a few people walking nearby, so they had to speed up until they reached the door of that room.

"Hey, the little ones!" a person suddenly exclaimed when they noticed them, although fortunately, they had seen them right at the door. "You two got up early, how good. We were already going to call you because you know... it's time to leave."

"Alright," another person added, arriving at the scene and smiling. "The car that will take us is already outside; I think it wouldn't be bad to get the two little ones ready to board them. Let's go."

"Okay, let's take them then."

The people began to pick up Diddy and Dixie in their arms and took them. After observing through windows and skylights, both could realize that it had already dawned and, as they had been told the night before, they were going to be taken away first thing in the morning. They were taken to another care room, where they were provided with food and a last bath before being taken out.

They were transported for a long time, between being lowered to the first floor and through various corridors and sections of the clinic. Diddy and Dixie even saw signs they hadn't seen before there, indicating zones such as "emergencies" and "primate area." A couple of minutes later, the people took them to the final exterior of the clinic, where there were small vehicular lanes and it was possible to observe part of that city behind a fence.

Later, the people arrived with them in their arms to a vehicle with rear doors, similar to the one that had brought them to that clinic. Then, they opened that vehicle door and placed Diddy and Dixie inside.

"Alright, little monkeys," one of the people said, smiling at them. "Stay here. We're going to take you now, so say goodbye to this place."

"And another thing..." the other person whispered. "In a few minutes they'll load a large box and... your four mechanical friends will come there. But hey, hardly anyone knows, okay?" they added, winking at them as a gesture of affirmation.

Later, and just as they said, two other people appeared with a large box in their arms and rushed to put it in that same vehicle with Diddy and Dixie. Both were able to corroborate that the Jennies

would be there, since this box had a few holes, which showed tiny parts of that quartet, in addition to certain murmurs from them.

After that, the people smiled one last at Diddy and Dixie and closed the door, leaving them inside that vehicle and alone in that compartment, in the company of the box with the mechanical children inside. There were a few windows, through which Diddy and Dixie could look outside. Suddenly, they felt the vehicle start and, minutes later, it began to accelerate and go slowly first.

"Those little ones are leaving now," other people, who had been watching them behind the vehicle, commented. Then, they said goodbye to them, smiling at them in the distance. "Goodbye, little monkeys! Take good care of yourselves... Do well!"

With a slight smile just for the occasion, Diddy and Dixie returned the farewell gesture towards the people, while they were quite happy for both of them. For a moment, both kongs kept like that. Suddenly... other people from that place came to the group of them... although they were seen with *a certain* expression of fear.

"Hey, hey, can anyone come for a while?!" one of those last people exclaimed, looking at the others with a panicked face.

"What? What's wrong?" another of the people asked, confused at seeing that expression.

"The apes!" the same person replied a little panicked. "The mandrills and the orangutan... are asleep, and d-don't want to wake up with anything! And they have the four little ones with them, asleep like that too!"

"Wait, wait, what are you talking about?!"

"We took the pulses of all of them and I-I think they have no *vital signs*!"

"Holy heavens!" the other people exclaimed, getting the same expression. "Let's see, let's go, let's see!"

The group of people, as if having an abrupt turn of context, rushed back into the clinic at an accelerated pace.

"And they had in their hands some jars that contained..." the last person who had arrived exclaimed, but what they were saying could no longer be heard.

Diddy and Dixie returned to the same expressions they had when they got into the vehicle, while they had their hands resting on the window and looked towards those people who had entered the clinic. The vehicle had already advanced a little further until it completely left that place. The last thing they saw from there was the entire shape of the building: light yellow and with large letters at the top that read: "Wildlife Rescue Center".

Then, both kongs just sat down and kept their eyes down. On the one hand, they were already calm that they had finally been able to leave that place without mishaps, and now they hoped that the return to Hurricane Island would not be complicated. But on the other hand... thoughts about the apes continued to hover through their minds and, above all... about the quartet, who were once their archenemies; perhaps because of their natural empathy or whatever, they could not deny that they caused them enough pity more than ever, since after and in spite of everything... they were just children who had not had luck because of the life in which they had to grow up. They also thought

about the stories told by the adult apes, and now they had finished understanding everything. They no longer knew what to think about the whole situation.

Without saying a word, the two just looked at each other with the same expressions of pity, while Diddy placed a hand on Dixie's shoulder as he always did in moments of seriousness. Then, the journey continued, this time with the vehicle speeding down the lanes. Between times, Diddy and Dixie also stood up to look out the windows and observe the exterior that was in sight...

Chapter 91: The End of the Hurricane

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

About an hour later, Diddy and Dixie were still inside the vehicle, which was still rolling. They kept looking out the windows at the whole landscape with no buildings in sight; instead, it now had wide horizons where the vast sea could begin to be seen.

Minutes later, the vehicle was stopped right on one of those beaches that were nearby. Suddenly, the door of the compartment where Diddy and Dixie were opened, and the people who had taken them let themselves be shown again. They took Diddy and Dixie down from there, with the box in which they brought Jenny's quartet. Then, they were taken to a dock where some small boats that seemed to carry heavy objects were docked.

The people went to one of those boats, where, after a few moments of dialogue with other people there, they loaded Diddy and Dixie in it, before they also boarded with the box containing Jenny's quartet.

Later, the ship sailed and began to sail over the sea, leaving that city behind. Diddy and Dixie were inside a cabin again, which had windows where they watched as they moved away from everything until they went further out to sea. The landscape that several minutes later they had was becoming only open sea and infinite horizons.

They spent several hours sailing in that boat, and the trip began to become exhausting and boring. Sleep was taking over Diddy and Dixie, so they took turns taking a break and sleeping while the other stayed up to watch that there were no mishaps along the way.

A few long hours later, the ship stopped next to a low cliff, which was from an island with a jungle atmosphere in the distance.

Suddenly, the doors of the cabin where Diddy and Dixie were opened, and the people appeared again to take them down with the box where the other kongs were. After disembarking everything, the people began to walk into that island. This time, they had taken the quartet of mechanical children out of the box and carried them in their arms as well; the children looked afraid at first, but Diddy and Dixie tried to gesture to them to stay calm.

Minutes later, they stopped in a jungle area, which looked quite calm and with a relaxing atmosphere in sight.

"Well, we've arrived, little monkeys," one of the people said as they left Diddy and Dixie on the ground. "You're free again. I know you'll be fine."

"Are you sure..." another one asked, doubtful, "that it won't be necessary to follow up on them?"

"Don't worry," the first person replied, smiling at Diddy and Dixie. "They're quite strong, and they know how to take care of themselves very well."

Diddy and Dixie made a few slight gestures of affirmation towards the people. Then, both stopped to observe the entire environment in front of them; it made them feel a bit of uncertainty deep

down, but at the same time, they smiled to know that they had returned to natural lands to search for Hurricane Island on their own. Afterward, Jenny's quartet joined them as they looked at the place as well.

"So, it seems that everything has ended here," the people said, ducking to be in front of Diddy and Dixie and placing their hands on their shoulders. "You're going to stay here; it's a good place for you and you'll be fine, or well... wherever you go."

"Take good care of yourselves, little ones," another of the people said, smiling at them in the same way. "We hope everything goes well for you and that you can find peace."

The two kongs looked towards the area and then looked towards the people, to whom they smiled for all the help they had been offered in that animal hospital. Then, Dixie looked up at a banana tree, gestured to Diddy, and headed over to climb it. They both picked up a few bananas, and then got off to go to the people and hand them those bananas while smiling at them.

"Oh, no, don't worry, little ones," one of the people said, emitting a little laugh at that detail from Diddy and Dixie. "But we'll take them anyway; we thank you."

Diddy and Dixie smiled at them again, while feeling quite a bit of gratitude towards the people at that moment. Although the first time they arrived at that hospital they were quite afraid of them, now they could not stop thanking them in their language for having treated them well and saved them in a way.

"Goodbye, little ones," one of the people said as the group of them lined up in front of Diddy and Dixie. "Take good care of yourselves, and take care of your little friends too," they added, pointing to the quartet. "Or well... I hope you can return them to their family as you tried to tell us."

Diddy and Dixie smiled one last time at the people, before beckoning the quartet to continue on their way. Without more to say, they both turned around and started walking into the jungle, also taking Jenny's quartet along with them: this time, the four kong children were all calm. In the distance, Diddy and Dixie turned to look at the people again and, seconds later, went completely into the trees in front of them.

Later, and as if it was already waiting for them, they noticed the presence of a path in sight, which was marked by a dirt road... Diddy and Dixie remembered *what* the apes had told them before leaving, and they could not believe it had turned out to be true. Even so, they still had to finish making sure, so they started the walk along that path, taking the quartet with them too.

They spent long minutes walking along that path. Between times, both could not help but think that they could get lost because of how surrounded by tall vegetation that site was, but even so, at no time did they stop, and just continued until they saw something that could resemble Hurricane Island, as they had been told. Fortunately, they did not encounter any obstacle or any danger that interfered in their way.

They reached the end of the path, which ended at an extensive beach where there were maritime horizons in sight. When suddenly... Diddy and Dixie gasped as they felt an enormous excitement after so long, after reaching to see... the very *Hurricane Island* in the distance. Although only a couple of times they had seen it from afar, it looked quite similar to how they remembered it, so they had almost no doubt that it was the same one.

"Is it t-the... Hurricane Island?" Dixie wondered, keeping her expression.

"The same one!" Diddy exclaimed, before jumping with excitement.

The two began to jump for joy while embracing each other with excitement, and then ran to hug the quartet as well, although the latter did not seem to understand. They were feeling an excitement they hadn't had in a while, since when they were still on Hurricane Island.

"*We did it!*" Diddy exclaimed, still jumping in victory, before getting serious again to react. "Well, now we have to see how we can get there."

"We'll put together a boat or a raft or whatever, there's no other way," Dixie replied as she looked all over the beach. "On the beaches there are usually tree and wood debris. Let's go!"

Without letting another minute pass, both set out to find materials that could be used to build a boat to transport, even if it was a small one. The task was not so complicated, since, similar to Hurricane Island, that beach also had several remains of wood and fallen vegetation, perhaps because the hurricane would pass in that area too.

Diddy and Dixie began to put together a small boat, enough for the two of them along with the other four kong children. Curiously, those children did not sit still, and rather helped them in the construction as if it were at their will; it was as if they had been left with the memories of when they built that ship on Hurricane Island.

Almost three hours passed while assembling the boat, which consisted of a small but at the same time spacious raft to be able to go the six together. At the end, Diddy and Dixie took a few minutes of rest, while the quartet inspected the raft as if they wanted to make sure everything was okay.

Then, without waiting any longer, Diddy and Dixie set out to launch the boat, letting the other four children board first so they wouldn't have to come into contact with the water. They pushed the raft until they managed to bring it to a point where the waves wouldn't hit as hard, and then the two of them climbed aboard, using a pair of oars to keep balanced.

Minutes later, the raft was already moving farther and farther away from that island, and now it was already sailing out to sea. With so many mishaps that used to happen to them, Diddy and Dixie were surprised to see that everything had gone well. They were both smiling knowing that now circumstances seemed to be moving forward.

The trip was feeling eternal, although the current was taking them in the direction of Hurricane Island anyway, so they did not have to make so much effort with the oars. On the way they were talking, paddling, or also taking care of the other children, since they wanted to get restless between moments.

"I'd think it's over," Diddy said in the middle of a conversation, as they took a break. "Everything looks calm and the sky somewhat clearer, compared to how it was before. I think the hurricane is definitely gone."

"It means we can go to DK Island," Dixie said, smiling for a few seconds. "Or well, we'll have to see first where it is... And also see if we find the animals, the children and Mr. Pinky," she added again, showing concern and looking into nothingness.

Diddy got the same expression too; it happened to them every time they remembered *that detail*. They could do nothing but wait to find that answer about the whereabouts of all of them. They tried

not to let that anxiety to know it dominate them, since just thinking about it left them quite overwhelmed.

Suddenly, their thoughts were interrupted when they saw that Melvyn was playing with the water, to which Dixie went to stop him from falling.

"Melvyn, no," Dixie said, taking his arm to get him back in the raft.

"And what will we do with these kids, by the way?" Diddy asked, looking at them all.

"Taking them to the shelter to take them to their family, I suppose," Dixie replied with a shrug, before remembering *why* Diddy could have asked that. "Oh, well... First of all, we'd have to ask if there is really someone waiting for them, otherwise, the same apes of the shelter could... you know, give them some last dignified goodbye. Because it wouldn't be a good idea to leave them as they are; it'd even be in vain."

"Geez, I don't understand how everything could have changed," Diddy said after a while. "Weren't we building that ship with them a few weeks ago?... And we had even fought with them over... silly things?"

"I guess it all took an unexpected turn," Dixie said again, shrugging and sitting down next to Diddy. "I don't even know how we couldn't notice before," she added before looking again at the quartet, who were watching the whole sea and Hurricane Island in the distance like innocent children. "I'd like to have met the real them... I'll never understand how there can be so much evil in this world," she said later in a tone of sadness. "Even the entire group of those criminal apes also went through so much evil throughout their lives."

"I know... And I don't know what to think about it anymore," Diddy added in the same tone of seriousness and looking into nothingness. "Sometimes it comforts me to know that the world is left with fewer criminals and future criminals; and among others, it comforts me to know that they're resting after so much martyrdom now. But above all... I think about those other four... and how it could have been prevented from becoming thug children, but no one could do it."

"Do you think they would have changed if they had continued to live in that hospital?"

"Well... I think at least Rocky and Melenky maybe yes, especially Rocky. As for Mandrew and Jemky... perhaps it would have been a bit more difficult for them. Oh... I don't know what else to think about them," he added before pausing for a couple of minutes. "But... what reassures me the most is that the three *main real criminals* will be paying for it dearly in life... Perhaps the little time they have left to live, in fact"

"I swear I've thought the same thing," Dixie replied in the same tone. "Maybe everything has been done the way it had to happen... The good thing is that it's all over. The Jennies have been the last victims of all that macabre organization, and no other animal will be anymore."

Both remained silent as they looked towards the quartet of mechanical children and towards Hurricane Island, which was getting closer and closer. At the same time, their inner joy grew at having come out safe and sound from it all.

"Wow, this raft is well made, after all," Diddy commented after a while, as giving light continuous strokes to the surface of the raft. "And we did it in just a few hours."

"And this time we didn't fight to see who builds a better boat," Dixie added jokingly.

"Hey!" Diddy replied in the same tone, giving her a slight nudge. "Well, at least it's true."

The two gave a few small laughs after remembering that, and then fell silent again. Afterwards, Dixie smiled at Diddy again, while he did the same, and between the two they gave light pushes in a playful way. The two stared at each other... and this time, they had their faces somewhat close, although they did not feel something precisely, but rather, they were in total confidence. When suddenly, Diddy and Dixie realized that Jenny and company were looking at them with curious faces, which then made them both blush a little, before looking at each other again and giving a few shy smiles.

"Uhh, well, and..." Diddy uttered, trying to downplay the moment. "Ah, look! We're almost there," he added, pointing to Hurricane Island.

"Ah, yeah, yeah, sure," Dixie replied almost in the same way, laughing shyly, before smiling more calmly. "Hey, seriously tough, we're pretty near... and it's really Hurricane Island!"

The trip had lasted almost an hour when it was finally ending. The boat was beginning to wobble on the waves near the seashore, so Diddy and Dixie had to steer the raft to a safe spot to stand. They asked the four children to hold on, and then they both got off the raft so they could drag it to the sand, where the waves no longer reached so much. They helped the four kong children get down, and then they all had their feet on the sand of the very Hurricane Island. It was already past mid-afternoon.

Diddy and Dixie looked out over the entire beach and vegetation heading into the island. Then, they both smiled as they looked around and saw that, indeed, *it was Hurricane Island* where they had arrived.

"*We did it!*" Dixie exclaimed before heading to hug Diddy with excitement, and he responded with the same energy.

"We arrived, Dix!" Diddy exclaimed with the same emotion. "We did it!"

Then, still with the emotion alive, the two ran to hug the quartet as well, as if for a moment they returned to the time where they were their friends and achieved something they had planned. The four kong children never seemed to understand Diddy and Dixie's excitement, but they still smiled and were infected with the same energy as the two of them.

"Let's go, we have to go to the shelter," Dixie said, smiling more calmly. "We have to look for the others. I think it was over there," she added, pointing in a direction into the wooded area.

Without waiting any longer, both began to enter the island, taking the four children with them. Diddy and Dixie already used to know several areas of Hurricane Island, so they didn't feel lost at all. Minutes later, they were already walking along the route leading to the shelter. Until at one point... they both stopped with the four children upon remembering something important.

"D-do you think... all of them are in the shelter?" Diddy asked, looking down the path.

"There's only one way to know," Dixie said the same way. "And if they're not there, we'll at least ask the others-"

Suddenly, a chimpanzee kong boy appeared on the way, who came running and stopped in front of them while giving them a curious look.

"Uh, hi?" Diddy said with a forced smile when he saw certain strange expressions in that child, who did not answer the greeting or say anything.

"Doesn't he speak?" Dixie asked, smiling at the same time with a look of strangeness. Suddenly, she noticed certain traits that this child had... which were becoming quite known to them. "Wait, wait a minute, Diddy!" she exclaimed, suddenly changing her expression. "Isn't this kid..."

"What?... Wait, is it him?" Diddy wondered, getting an expression of astonishment too when he noticed the boy better.

Suddenly, five other children appeared coming to them, who were of different species and also had the same strange gestures, while looking curiously at Diddy and Dixie.

"I can't believe it," Dixie exclaimed, looking more astonished, as she looked at Diddy as well.

"Are they? The same ones?" Diddy wondered in the same way, beginning to smile with excitement.

"Yeah! Yes, they are!" Dixie replied with the same emotion, as they looked at the known features of those kongs.

About six more ape children appeared, increasing Diddy and Dixie's amazement. Both were feeling an enormous excitement and as if a part of their calm had returned after realizing that they were... the *children from that herd*, whom they had rescued.

"I don't believe it! They're *alive!*" Dixie exclaimed, jumping with excitement along with Diddy. "They have been saved!"

"It's them!" Diddy added in the same way, before looking at them again. "And by the way, did they all manage to be saf-"

"Oh, holy heavens, these children!" a different voice exclaimed suddenly. "They have got restless again!"

Suddenly, Diddy and Dixie gasped again as their astonishment increased, seeing three known silhouettes a few meters from them, who were also looking at them with the same expression... They were three animals, including an elephant, a zebra and a tiger.

"No... No, I must be dreaming," the elephant said, going blank as did the other two.

"Are they the real *Diddy and Dixie?*" the zebra asked with the same expression.

"What?! It's you!" Diddy exclaimed, heading towards them alongside Dixie, while they both had the same shocked expressions. "You're alive!"

Suddenly, and as if they had recovered their sense of reality, Diddy and Dixie ran towards those animals with more excitement than they already had at that moment.

"You're alive!" Dixie exclaimed as they ran toward them.

Diddy and Dixie gave each of them a quick hug of excitement, at the same time that those animals got the same expression as they reacted to seeing them both. The emotion was so great that they could even forget any mishap at that moment.

"No, I can't believe it! *I can't believe it!*" the elephant exclaimed along with the other two animals with excitement. "It's you two! You're safe and sound! You came out alive!"

"Oh, by the holy heavens!" the zebra added in the same way. "I swore that something terrible could have happened to you two, but you're so... healthy."

"W-what happened to you?!" the tiger asked them with such emotion. "You're completely fine, right?!"

"We want to ask you the same thing," Dixie replied, still trying to calm her excitement. "We're fine, and you?"

"All right," the elephant replied, still smiling broadly. "And now better, seeing you two well. We thought we'd never see you again."

"And how did you survive, by the way?" Dixie asked them so curiously. "You *all* were saved, right? Or some of you didn't-"

"All of us!" the elephant replied confidently, which increased the relief in Diddy and Dixie. "Thanks to heaven, we managed to save all of us; it was quite complicated but we did it. Y-you see, after that storm tossed the whole ship, those of us who were bigger struggled underwater to get it back afloat. Then, we tried to get back on board and help those who had fallen into the sea; we endured a little longer through the storm until we managed to see an islet where we could stop. Obviously, it took us hours all that, and even some of us didn't appear until one or two days later, and we just found all of us complete when we arrived on this island. Fortunately, the children were unharmed; they stayed inside the cabins."

"Geez, that sounds tremendous!" Diddy said, still astonished.

"The only ones who were missing... were you and your four little friends," the zebra said. "We thought we had lost you all, but now you have returned even with your friends, it's amazing!" he added, going to observe the Jenny and company's quartet.

"And how did you survive?" the tiger asked them with the same curiosity. "What happened to you?"

"Oh, no. It's really a long story," Diddy replied. "We just can tell you that we woke up on another island out of nowhere and those tamers caught us to take us elsewhere."

"Holy heavens! What a horror!" the animals exclaimed, all showing astonishment and horror at the answer. "And what did those bestial beings want to do with you?"

"They were going to take us on a plane with these four kids," Dixie replied. "They even had those very apes and those other four kids who were our schoolmates as prisoners... It was truly a nightmare; literally, we almost didn't make it back anymore, maybe the two of us or either of us."

"Yeah, it was terrible," Diddy added. "Seriously, we came out alive by miracle. But at least in the end-"

Diddy stopped suddenly after seeing that more of the animals in the herd had arrived, along with more of the rescued kong children.

"Diddy? Dixie? Is it r-really *you*?" a gorilla who had arrived and looked astonished exclaimed. "I can't believe it!"

"You are safe and sound!" a rhinoceros added in the same way.

The newly arrived animals crowded towards Diddy and Dixie, to whom they greeted them with joy, and they returned the greeting with the same emotion. For both of them it was an amazing thing that everything went well after so much hustle. But suddenly... both were speechless and now really felt that they were all complete when they saw *another member* that was missing: a muscular, mustachioed gorilla with fixed hairstyle was also with the other animals.

"Mr. Pinky!" Diddy and Dixie exclaimed in unison with such excitement as they ran straight for him.

Diddy and Dixie threw themselves into hugging Mr. Pinky's arms, while looking at him with enough excitement upon knowing that he was okay, as well as the other animals and kong children in the herd.

"Mr. Pinky!" Diddy exclaimed excitedly after breaking away from his arm. "You're safe, mister!"

"We're glad to see you again!" Dixie added in the same cheerful way. "H-how have you been? Is everything... Uhh... *Okay*?"

Suddenly, both Diddy and Dixie changed their expressions again when they realized that Mr. Pinky... didn't respond to them in the same way they did. Both remembered the conditions in which the apes had left him and, as if it were sudden, their mood dropped again almost as before they found them all.

"Uhh, Mr. Pinky?" Diddy said as he looked just at a gorilla who was looking at them with a lost look as if they were strangers. "Oh, right... Doesn't he remember us?"

"Uhh, hey, little friends," the elephant said, getting a pitied expression too. "I'm sorry to tell you that Mr. Pinky... is no longer Mr. Pinky as such... He's not in their five senses, so to speak. He... *is gone*."

Diddy and Dixie kept looking towards Mr. Pinky, who barely looked at them without expression and as if he did not know them at all; in fact, he even did not make any gesture or sign; he just was just there. Afterwards, they both looked at the kong children they had rescued... who were in the same way but a little more hyperactive.

"And yeah... These children too," the tiger added, looking sad too. "That's why they haven't even been handed over to their relatives who have come to look for them; they'd see that they're not their same children. Only the owners of the shelter have been doing games and activities to get their minds awakened a little, but even so... it seems that it's in vain."

"No, wait!" Dixie exclaimed, stopping the conversation. "I think... maybe that can be remedied."

"What are you talking about?" the animals asked her with a look of strangeness.

"It's that... the evil apes themselves told us a way to make them supposedly recover their memory... although it hasn't been tried and I don't know if it'd work."

"Ah, yeah," Diddy added. "With a mixture of sapphire and emerald powder. We have the emerald, but they told us that the sapphires could be found in any underground cave here."

"What?!" the other animals exclaimed, all confused and looking at them strangely.

"And... are you sure it'll work?" the elephant asked them.

"That's what we don't know," Dixie replied. "But we can try anyway. What do you say?... That's what those apes told us before they died."

"I'd say yes; I don't know about the others," the zebra replied, before the rest of the animals murmured similar things. "Okay, so, show us what that procedure is like... And by the way, did you kill those apes or what?"

"Well... not exactly," Diddy replied with some insecurity as he recalled it. "Rather... they decided it themselves. Long explanation."

"Geez, I'm quite intrigued to know," the tiger said. "I see that a lot of things have happened to you."

"Hey, how about going inside the shelter to have a snack?" the elephant proposed. "So you can greet the others and then tell us well what happened to you after you got lost in that storm."

"That sounds good," Diddy replied, nodding.

"Okay, then let's go," Dixie added, shrugging and smiling a little.

Then, Diddy and Dixie, along with Jenny's quartet, headed inside the animal shelter, being accompanied by the herd together.

Upon entering, it felt quite welcoming for both of them to return to that place after weeks that seemed to have been months ago. As expected, several of the known animals saw them and began to greet them cheerfully. They also found other animals of the herd that were missing, in addition to the rest of the rescued children and, as they had been told... they were all *complete and safe*. Another detail that they could notice was that the animals that had been from the circus or the zoo were seen better than ever; some of them even no longer lived there because they had fully recovered.

"But it's the little monkeys!" one of the owners of the shelter exclaimed with his group. "What happened to you? How have you been? You're safe and sound!"

"It's a long story, but we came out okay," Diddy replied cheerfully.

"Come, come in!" another of the owners said, making gestures of welcome to them.

Diddy and Dixie followed the apes, while greeting more of the known animals. After that, the shelter owners offered them something to eat, as they did before when the two had arrived at the shelter three months ago. Truth be told, Diddy and Dixie were quite hungry, even though on the way, the people at that hospital had already supplied them with something to eat.

Chapter End Notes

The next chapters will be calm... We're already nearing the end :3

Chapter 92: One Last Restoration

"That's crazy!" one of the animals exclaimed to Diddy and Dixie, looking astonished along with the others. "You two were about to never come back. You have truly been miraculously saved."

"And those insane tamers never wanted to give up," another of the animals added in the same way. "Until you defeated them once and for all."

The herd of animals was accompanying Diddy and Dixie as they headed into an underground cave to look for sapphires, as the group of apes had said. They didn't know for sure if that would work for them, but they still had to do something for the herd of rescued children and for Mr. Pinky, even if it was the only possible option.

Along the way, they were commenting about the journey Diddy and Dixie had had, which they had recently told them about while they were at the shelter. All the animals were astonished when they were talking about the topic.

"Hey, but seriously," another animal added. "You defeated that whole criminal organization against animals. Even his minion apes... Or well, they wanted to do it on their own in the end."

"I'm really shocked," another of the animals said, smiling at Diddy and Dixie in amazement. "Now those darn bestial tamers are going to really pay for all for the rest of their short lives! No one will have to worry about them anymore."

"So It will be..." Dixie said, also smiling calmly. "And we really expect them to pay dearly."

Later, Diddy, who was in front along with Dixie, stopped to point in one direction, grabbing everyone's attention.

"It's over there," Diddy said, pointing to the entrance of a dark cave.

"How did you know about this cave?" Dixie asked.

"Ricky and Melvyn had shown it to me," Diddy replied before pausing. "Or well, Rocky and Melenky instead. That was when I went out with them to... find something to give you that gift that time," he added, blushing with some embarrassment.

"Ahh, the time of the carnivorous plant," Dixie said with a little laugh.

Diddy and Dixie entered the cave where Diddy had been before; as he had said, it was where he had tried to get an emerald for Dixie; that time when he gave her that ruined gift. Some of the animals also accompanied them.

The cave was still as bright with stones as it had been seen before; among them, there were sky blue sapphires just like those that the group of apes had. Diddy and Dixie did not wait any longer and took several of them, helping themselves with some stones to extract them. Their hopes of being able to solve the situation were growing; perhaps it was not a lie what those apes had told them. The animals that were accompanying them had brought some containers to collect the sapphires.

Several minutes later, Diddy and Dixie along with the animals got out of the cave with the containers full of those sapphires, which sparkled so brightly in the sunset light. Then, everyone gathered again so they could return to the shelter.

"And we'll have to crush those sapphires, right?" one of the animals asked as they walked. "And then to mix them with the emerald?"

"That's right," Dixie replied. "But that latter is just a piece, nothing more. And it won't harm them, don't worry. It's only harmful when used excessively to heal wounds."

"And we just have to put that mixture in their heads, according to those apes," Diddy added.

"And if they recover their memories," one of the animals said, "we can give them back to their families, right?"

Dixie and Diddy paused for a while, at the same time looking at each other upon remembering that same detail.

"Uhh, no..." Dixie told them, causing the herd of animals to stop suddenly. "I don't think so yet."

"What are you saying?" one of the animals asked, looking at them strangely. "Some of them have been looking for those kids."

"It's that... I don't think the shelter should deliver them just like that now," Dixie replied with concern. "Maybe you have to ask those kids directly if they want to go with their families."

"That's true," Diddy added in the same way. "Do you remember what we told you about those four mechanical children? We have been told that those other rescued kids are almost the same in terms of the situations in which they live."

"Oh... sure. That's true," one of the animals replied while the others also murmured with concern. "So, what do we do with all those kids? They're little creatures."

"I'd think to ask them first," Dixie replied. "I mean, if their memories manage to return, we'll have to explain the situation first, and after that, ask them... what their homes and relatives are like, and whether they're happy or not. Because otherwise, maybe something has to be done to help them or something."

"Well, you're right," another animal replied pensively. "We'll have to talk to the shelter owners then; maybe they can give us alternatives for those little ones."

"And by the way, little monkeys," another of the animals said. "And what about your four little friends, the mechanical children?"

"Well..." Diddy said before heaving a sigh, "I think there is nothing that can be done for them. You know, they... no longer exist; they're no longer them as such, and... they're just that: *mechanicals*; they're machines now."

"It's a pity," Dixie added in the same way. "I guess we'll just have to turn them off and that's it. And maybe give them to their families... if someone finds them and they claim them. Although in any case, it'll be up to their families if they'll want them in that new way or if they'll give them a dignified end."

"I get it... So, we just have to see what could be done with them," one of the animals said, showing pity along with the others. "One of our companions must be the father of one of those children. He no longer lives in the shelter, but we can still look for him. As for the other three children, we'd have to look for their families."

"We'll have to ask if anyone knows about those children."

The herd continued walking towards the shelter. Meanwhile, Diddy and Dixie were thinking about the whole situation and begging in their minds that the procedure could restore the memory of all those kong children and Mr. Pinky; otherwise, the real children and the real Mr. Pinky would be gone forever, leaving only their walking bodies.

Diddy and Dixie were back at the shelter with the herd of animals that were from the circus. They were gathered in an area outside the shelter, where they had some privacy. Next to them, there was the herd of rescued kong children, Jenny's quartet and Mr. Pinky, whom they had sitting in rows for due procedure. The apes who owned the shelter were also present to see the whole scene and inform them about the fate of those children.

The larger animals were helping Diddy and Dixie crush and grind the sapphires and a piece of the emerald, either with their paws or with some stone tool. Others had brought containers of water for the mixture. Last time, Diddy and Dixie had made that mixture with the help of the evil apes' devices, but this time, they had to use their own means to do it, which worried them a little that it wouldn't turn out the same.

Later, they began to make the mixture until they managed to get it to resemble as closely as possible to one, and then poured it into several small containers. Once they had everything ready, Diddy and Dixie began to take one of the containers and pour the mixture over the heads of the kong children and Mr. Pinky, whom they then gave a few massages, as the evil apes had indicated. Being so many children, the other animals that could do it helped them. The procedure was a little difficult, especially with those ones with hair.

"And how long will it take for them to take effect?" one of the animals asked.

"Maybe in a short time," Diddy replied, before looking at all the children and Mr. Pinky, who now looked disheveled and without any change in their expression. "Or well... maybe we have to wait tomorrow; it worked the next day with Dixie, when she was saved in that hospital."

The herd of rescued children along with Mr. Pinky were still in the same way and with all lost looks, that even the children from Jenny's quartet were seen with more expression and vitality than them, as if it were the opposite.

"We'll have to wait then," one of the apes who owned the shelter said. "And if it doesn't work... I don't know how we're going to deliver these children to their families and they'll see them in that state. Or in any case, we have to deliver them as they are, there would be no other choice."

"And what will we do with the other four children?" another shelter owner asked. "I mean... with those children who were mechanized."

Diddy and Dixie looked towards the quartet, who were looking at them too while smiling.

"We have to... turn them off," Dixie replied in a sorrowful way, "and to look for their families if you find them, and let them decide what to do for them."

"Well, we know the father of the boy you called *Ricky*," one of the owners replied, looking at them pensively. "You told us that the girl you called *Mandy* has also been looked for, right?... Sure, I guess it's *Destiny*, a little girl her siblings had been asking about a few months ago."

"Wait, were her siblings the ones who were searching for her?" Dixie asked them in astonishment.

"Yes, the same ones. They were six chimpanzee kids; they were searching for one of their sisters. They said she used to go out frequently and get lost... until one day she never returned.

"And only her siblings were searching for her?" Diddy asked them. "What about... their parents?"

"They didn't live with them. Those kids told us that their father had died a few years ago on a dangerous journey, and that their mother then abandoned them all."

"No, how terrible," Dixie said, shocked. "And do you know something about... 'Melvyn' and 'Jenny'? We were told their names were Timothy and Ally."

"Hmm, no... We don't know about the other two children. Or at least no one has ever come to ask us about any lost *Timothy or Ally*. Although perhaps it can be found out, because it's strange that no one has searched for them being lost for so long, unless those children are not from this island. Generally, as for missing animals, someone used to come and ask for them at this shelter."

Diddy and Dixie looked at each other uncertainly; the answers given to them by the apes in the shelter closely resembled what they had been told about the quartet of mechanical children.

"Well, so..." one of the owners said, shrugging his shoulders with a pitied expression too, "we must proceed. I think you can already turn off these four children. We can go deliver them right now, at least to the little boy called Tommy and the little girl called Destiny. As for the other two ones, we can ask if anyone knows them. So... do it, little monkeys. You can turn them off now," he told Diddy and Dixie.

Diddy and Dixie turned to look back at the quartet for a few seconds. Those children smiled at them again in such an innocent way that it only caused them more pity to Diddy and Dixie; every time they looked at them like that, it reminded them of the time when they thought they were their friends, even if it all turned out to be a tremendous and dark farce. Then, they both walked towards them while they were still smiling at them.

"You with them and I with them," Diddy whispered to Dixie, pointing to each of the children. "The blue button, right?"

Dixie nodded, and then each headed towards two of them: Dixie with Jenny and Mandy, and Diddy with Melvyn and Ricky.

"Uh, hey, friends," Dixie told the quartet, trying to keep a smile towards them. "We're going to... play something, but we need to check your heads first, okay?"

"And don't worry, it won't be anything bad," Diddy added in the same way. "You all will be fine... and you will rest, we promise."

The quartet looked at them strangely at first, but then they smiled at them again as if nothing had happened. Diddy and Dixie looked one last time at the innocent and expressive faces of the four; suddenly, they thought of the real children that they would have been, even though they did not know them and, at the same time, they thought about the moments they had spent with them. They even remembered the other quartet for a moment, specifically at the moment they gave them those jars at the hospital. They thought about... how different lives would have been for all those primate children.

With nothing else to do, Diddy and Dixie began to press in each of the four of them, the buttons that opened their heads and, before they got restless, they looked for that blue button that had been mentioned, and turned them off completely. Then, they closed their heads again... ending the procedure, and the children got motionless in their entirety... now showing empty expressions in them, as they were when they were turned off.

"Well... It's time," the shelter owners said in a low tone, before heading toward the quartet.

Diddy and Dixie stared one last at the four of them, this time with sad looks.

"Rest well..." Dixie told them in a low tone. "No one is going to hurt you anymore."

Then, the apes of the shelter proceeded to take the four kong children in their arms and, after closing their eyes to each one, they took them away from there, while all the other animals along with Diddy and Dixie stared at them until they lost sight of them completely.

Diddy and Dixie just lowered their gazes, while looking at each other very sadly. At that moment, they were having almost the same feeling they had when they left that hospital, after having witnessed the end of those apes and the other quartet, mostly for those latter. Suddenly, they both felt like someone was touching their shoulders; it was some of the animals, who looked at them in the same way.

"We could not save them..." Dixie said, her eyes down. "We're sorry."

"Nothing could be done for them," Diddy added in the same way.

"Don't worry," said one of the animals after heaving a sigh. "At least you managed to bring those four children back, and helped them to now be able to really rest... And well... it's the least you could do for them."

"And you haven't lost..." another of the animals added in the same tone. "There are still the other children and your teacher Pinky, who we still have to wait to see what will happen to them... You two are still little heroes, after all."

The animals continued to look at them compassionately, while Diddy and Dixie returned the same expressions for a while.

"Hey, look at this!" one of the animals exclaimed suddenly.

Everyone turned to look at who was calling them. It was some of the same animals in the herd, who were watching one of the rescued kong children.

"It looks like this kid is talking," one of those animals said.

"What did you say?!" another of the animals exclaimed.

The animals of the herd, along with Diddy and Dixie, headed towards the scene where they were observing one of the kong children.

"Look at him, I think he's seeing us," one of the animals said as he gestured to the kong boy. "Hey, kid, c-can you hear us? Can you speak?"

Everyone was gaping and murmuring among themselves when they saw that; in fact, that child was having new gestures for them. The boy was still looking lost, but now as if he was wondering where he was, while looking strangely at others.

"Can you see us?" another of the animals asked.

The kong boy looked at them more deeply, while starting to *emit murmurs*.

"W-what..." he uttered slowly.

The animals, along with Diddy and Dixie, looked at each other and murmured louder after hearing those short words from that child. Diddy and Dixie had never heard those children speak since they were building that ship. According to the animals, those children also did not utter any words during the time they had been with them, which was why they were now curious to see that he had just spoken.

"Hey, boy, look at me," another of the animals said, looking straight at him and holding his shoulders. "Do you remember anything? Do you have a name?"

"W-what... W-who..." the little boy uttered again.

"Your *name*. Do you remember your name? What's your name?"

"Henr... Henry," the boy replied, still looking at them strangely, but leaving the whole herd astonished.

"He answered! He answered!" one of the animals exclaimed in a shocked way.

The whole herd began to murmur with greater surprise after seeing that curious event. Diddy and Dixie, who were also astonished, went to look closely at the boy, who had certain physical traits known to them.

"It must be the same one!" Dixie exclaimed. "This boy is called that; that's how we heard other children call him in those video recordings at the time he was kidnapped."

"So... is the mixture working?" one of the animals asked, still in amazement.

"Hey, look at this little girl over here!" another of the animals interrupted.

When they turned to look, everyone saw one of the kong girls in the herd, who was suddenly also having gestures similar to those of the first child. Everyone went to observe her more closely and, indeed, the girl was also looking at them with a gesture, as if she was trying to react to the situation.

"Can you talk, girl?" one of the animals asked, while everyone watched curiously.

"Hmm... Me?" the little girl answered in a slow way, deepening her gaze.

The whole herd was amazed and looked at each other again, this time with more excitement.

"It must be working!" Diddy exclaimed with the same expression.

"So, maybe we should wait," Dixie added, smiling. "Maybe until tomorrow."

"We have to tell the other owners of this shelter as soon as they return," one of the animals said. "In the meantime, we have to take these children to their place to rest, Mr. Pinky too. Let's go!"

Then, the animals began to hold each of the rescued kong children in their arms or by their hands. Diddy and Dixie also set out to help them, since there were quite a few. Some other children also began to show more expressive gestures, which increased hope in the herd and in Diddy and Dixie; if that mixture was effective, they would have really managed to save Mr. Pinky and all those children.

They took the kong children to a corner, where they had been leaving them to rest at night all those days. For each one, they had set up a place made of leaves and branches to sleep in, as well as a place to eat. As for Mr. Pinky, they also had for him a stall near where the owners of the shelter rested. The hours of the evening were present, so they left all of them ready to sleep.

The ape owners of the shelter who were present, let Diddy and Dixie sleep for that night there, after also giving them something to eat. Both slept right in the same place they were assigned the first day they had arrived at that shelter. They were close to where the animals that were from the circus slept, so they had no problem... Now they just waited for the next day to arrive with news.

Chapter 93: An Expected Miracle

The next day had arrived, and the animals of the herd were having an aperitif, all gathered at the tables. Later, Diddy and Dixie joined them as they arrived; they both felt they had rested well after such a long time. Then, everyone was finishing eating, while some of them were getting up and picking up their trays.

Later, the apes who owned the shelter came to them and greeted them.

"How about it, everyone? How have you been?" the apes greeted them by smiling at the animals, while they responded in the same way.

"It's all right," some of the animals replied consecutively.

"What time did you come back last night?" one of the animals asked the apes. "Did you manage to hand over those four children?"

The apes emitted a sigh as they changed to a serious expression, placing their hands at their own sides.

"Yes... We've already done it," one of them replied. "It was difficult, but we were able to deliver them, at least the boy in the blue shirt and the girl in pink and short hair; we gave them both to his father and her siblings respectively... It was quite hard to see them and deliver them to them like that, but even so... they'll be at least a little calmer now to know about their children."

"What a pity," one of the animals said in a sorrowful tone with the others. "And what about the other two children?"

"Oh... I don't know what was worse," one of the owners replied, keeping his expression, "if to deliver those two children to their families in that state... or that the other two children weren't claimed by their immediate relatives. We asked some ape families if they knew the other girl and they said yes, but that it was in vain to take her to her parents because she hadn't lived with them for a long time; they said her parents were very mean to her. In the end, we gave her to a family of apes that was close to her for just a few months, because honestly, according to what they told us, we better not bother to look for her parents."

"What? But how is it possible for parents to be like that?" one of the animals exclaimed in a tone of indignation. "Didn't they even ask about their daughter?"

"They didn't even show up. And as for the other child, the one in overalls... according to some families, there is no one to receive that boy. They said that his father was the worst, and that as a result of marital problems, he abandoned him, and he hasn't been seen again for years, and that his mother treated him very badly, and she hasn't even been seen looking for her son. So, we gave him to the same family that we gave the other girl, to give them their due dignified rest... It's a real pity," he added, shaking his head from side to side.

"What a horror," one of the animals commented. "So, what has been told to Diddy and Dixie is true. How can it be possible that those parents have treated their own children in that way? Did they really not love them?"

"And maybe Diddy and Dixie are right," another animal added. "Perhaps the other rescued children may be in similar situations; we'll have to ask all of them if they're happy at their homes or if they need any help."

"That's what we're going to do," one of the owner apes said. "We have to help those little ones if they're in almost the same situations... And by the way, we were told that those kids were reacting last night, is that true?"

"Indeed," one of the animals replied. "Some of them even answered us what their names were, and according to Diddy and Dixie, they did answer well."

"Hey, come and see this!" another of the owner apes exclaimed, arriving at the scene.

Everyone turned to look at the ape, who was showing a face of excitement, which increased the curiosity in others.

"What's going on?" the animals asked him.

"It's the ape children! They're speaking with all clarity and wondering where they are! And Pinky too!"

"What?! Let's see!"

The whole herd was shocked by those words and, without asking any further questions, immediately headed towards the area where they had the kong children. Diddy and Dixie, on their part, looked at each other in amazement with smiles appearing on their faces, before accompanying the rest of the herd.

Upon arriving at the site, everyone was astonished to see all the rescued kong children, who were now so expressive... and also afraid by the presence of the animals. One of the apes in the shelter headed towards them so he could calm them down.

"Don't worry, don't panic, don't be afraid!" the ape told the herd of children. "They're just the animals that are sheltering here too; they don't do harm."

"Are there so many animals?" one of the children asked, speaking and expressing himself afraid with total normality.

"B-but how did we get here?" another of the children asked in the same way. "How long did you say it happened?"

"As I explained," one of the owner apes replied. "You all had been kidnapped for one or two months, but you're now safe, and we had you in this shelter because your memory had been erased. But don't worry, everything *is fine now*."

Diddy and Dixie had been shocked upon seeing that the kong children were already speaking normally. They wanted to make sure everything was okay, so they immediately headed towards the herd of children, who were still scared and gathered in small groups.

"Hey!" Dixie called them, arriving with Diddy in front of them. "Uh, hello. Are you okay?! C-can you speak? Do you know your names and who you are?"

"Can you understand what we're saying?" Diddy added in the same way.

"Uhh, yeah?... I guess," some of the children replied, looking strangely at Diddy and Dixie at the unexpected questions. It was obvious that neither of those children knew the two of them.

"But what is all this?" one of the children asked. "And how have we been kidnapped?"

"Wait, first of all..." Dixie said, "can someone tell me: what is the last thing you remember? Just to know if you're completely okay."

The herd of children began to look at each other strangely, while they murmured and continued to be doubtful.

"I remember..." a girl in the herd said, still with a doubtful look, "that a blond chimpanzee girl with short hair and a red bow wanted to offer me a lollipop by force... And then, two other boys appeared, one in overalls and another in a blue shirt, and between the three of them they attacked me and put a liquid very close to my nose."

"Wait a minute!" another of the girls interrupted. "I remember something similar: a blonde girl with short hair and red bow, along with another blonde with a ponytail, said they wanted to be my friends, until they also put a liquid close to my nose, and since there, I no longer remember anything."

"I remember some kids like that too!" another of the boys added. "It was a boy in overalls and another in a blue shirt with a girl in a red bow. They wanted to offer me some candies and I was struggling with them because they wanted to pour a dark liquid on me."

"A blonde girl with a ponytail appeared to me," another of the children added. "She asked me to help her open a bottle and then pushed it to my nose."

"I saw four kids like that!" another of the children continued. "They were two boys and two girls, with those same characteristics, who wanted to catch me and put something to my nose; from there I don't remember *anything*. And I don't know about you, but... I don't know what those kids were! I hit the boy in overalls while defending myself from him, and his head got open like a robot!"

The kong children murmured louder while they all told similar experiences, all coinciding with the characteristics of that quartet of mechanical children. As they told each experience, they made faces of shock, especially when someone told of having seen any of those children with mechanical characteristics.

Diddy and Dixie, on the one hand, made faces of excitement and enormous relief when they realized that those children were expressing themselves well completely and, what ended up confirming that, were the experiences they were telling, since that was what happened to them before they were hypnotized.

"Hey, keep calm, keep calm!" Dixie told them by calming them all down and getting their attention. "Well, yes... That's what happened to you all. If you remember that, it means you're fine," she added, smiling with relief.

"And how do you know it?" one of the children asked them, still looking at them strangely. "What did they do to us?"

"In short, this is what happened," Diddy replied, calming them down again. "Those four children who caught you, wasn't really them; *they were mechanical children* who were being controlled by

four other ape children; those other four children had been ordered by their dads to kidnap you; those ape dads of theirs wanted to *mechanize you* like those four children that you saw; and, at the same time, those same apes had been ordered by three *human circus tamers*: they were the *masterminds* of all this... Did you understand me, right?" he finished with a forced smile.

"But don't worry!" Dixie added in the same way. "All that is over now; we managed to bring you back and help you recover your memories. And we've made the masterminds behind this pay, so don't fear."

"You're kidding!" one of the children exclaimed, gaping along with the others. "Did all that really happen?... And has it seriously been *two months*? I feel like it was just minutes ago."

"I know, and they wanted to take us too," Dixie added. "They made us believe that those four mechanical children were our friends for a while; they even invited us to build a ship *with you all*, believe it or not."

"What?!" one of the girls exclaimed, still shocked. "But at what point did all that happen? What in the world!"

"But it's all right now, don't be afraid," Diddy told them, calming them down. "You're safe now."

The kong children kept muttering among themselves with shocked expressions; none of them could believe everything that had happened to them. Meanwhile, Diddy and Dixie were still quite relieved that, after all the hustle and all that tragic odyssey... they had managed to really save those children.

"Hey, look who also recovered!" one of the apes of the shelter exclaimed, arriving at the scene.

Diddy and Dixie, as everyone, turned to look... The faces of both showed an enormous excitement upon seeing that they had brought *another gorilla*, to whom, without thinking at all, they ran at speed. That gorilla also showed the same expression when he saw them both.

"*Mr. Pinky!*" Diddy and Dixie exclaimed in unison, as each took his arm.

"Mr. Diddy and Miss Dixie!" he exclaimed, looking at them with astonishment and expressing himself with all normality. "W-what happened?!"

Diddy and Dixie were much more excited after seeing that, indeed... Mr. Pinky was already back in his five senses and had recognized them perfectly.

"Mr. Pinky," Dixie said with a broad smile, "you're fine. Uh, you're okay, right? Can you speak well?! Can you remember something?!"

"Uhh, yes... I guess so," Mr. Pinky replied with much confusion. "I mean, I feel good, but... what happened? How did I get here again?"

"You had been kidnapped too!" Diddy replied quickly. "The apes! Some mandrills and orangutans; they had even erased your memory and wanted to turn you into *mechanical*."

"What?!" the teacher exclaimed, showing himself all shocked. "D-did you mention *mandrills and orangutans*?... Did you see them or what?!"

"Yes, yes, yes, the same ones!" Diddy quickly replied. "We even fight them, it's a l-long story; we can tell you in detail later, but yeah... And by the way, by any chance... did you *know* those apes?" he asked with some curiosity.

Mr. Pinky kept being shocked, as if he didn't know what to say, but making the answer to Diddy and Dixie clear.

"Uhh... yes..." he replied slowly, before continuing to speak normally. "Yeah, t-that's another story, but yes. And those same apes had caught me; it's the last thing I remember. I was on that other island, coming out of my last teachers' meeting, until... those apes caught me and sprayed something on me, and I don't remember anything else from there. Suddenly, am I here again?"

"So many things have happened," said one of the apes in the shelter, joining the conversation. "But now it's all right; these two little ones managed a lot of things and now everyone is safe," he added, pointing to Diddy and Dixie.

"W-what?" Mr. Pinky exclaimed, looking more confused and shocked as he looked at them both. "Did you two..."

Diddy and Dixie just gave a broad smile at Mr. Pinky's confused look, who still seemed to be processing everything.

"Well, everything will be explained to you soon," one of the apes added. "So, don't you want to come and have something to eat, Pinky? And the other children can come too," he added kindly.

The apes took the entire herd to the main refuge area. The rescued kong children did not know that place, so they had to be explained how it worked and what areas it had; some of them were still a little afraid, but the other animals along with Diddy and Dixie helped them stay calm. Mr. Pinky, on the other hand, was still confused and processing the situation; he seemed not to believe all that journey they told him.

The rescued kongs were gathered at several tables for a snack. Diddy and Dixie accompanied them too, while they were telling them in more detail everything that had happened... Actually, the rescued kong children didn't even know they were building that ship and had no idea at first who Diddy and Dixie were. Mr. Pinky, on his part, had not even seen any of those children; perhaps he knew a few of them by face, but at no time did he remember seeing them along with Diddy and Dixie.

Diddy and Dixie took several minutes to explain the whole situation, in addition to answering any questions asked by the children or Mr. Pinky. Obviously, they tried not to delve into personal details, because... some events for which the journey began were because of the things that caused their conflicts or their love breakup; they found it somewhat uncomfortable to remember those details, but they tried to explain them as superficially as they could.

They all stayed a while longer, trying to process the whole situation. Until later, they gathered the rescued kong children back together to ask them some questions about handing them over to their respective families. On the other hand, the owner apes were talking with Mr. Pinky to confirm that everything was fine.

Later, Mr. Pinky was about to go home along with Diddy and Dixie. But before that, Diddy and Dixie were near some branches talking to some of the herd of animals, while looking around at the entire shelter.

"I guess those children will already be handed over to their families," one of the animals said.

"Not yet, maybe some of them," another one replied. "The shelter owners said they'll try to make sure if the rumors about their lives are true or not. The good thing is that they're now safe and have recovered."

Diddy and Dixie were staring at the herd of kong children in the distance; despite all the heartbreaking moments they had to see on the journey, especially the day before, it was comforting that at least they were able to save those children who were about to be other victims of that macabre group of circus tamers.

"Hey, little monkeys," one of the animals, who was next to them, called them. "I guess that... you'll be going to your DK Island in a few days, won't you?" he asked them with a sigh.

"Yes... I guess," Diddy replied with a smile. "Although we still have to see how and on what we'll leave... We don't even know yet where it is. The hurricanes are already over, right?"

"Yes... It seems that there is no need to fear anymore," another of the animals replied. "Although we have heard that this island is quite far from there."

Everyone continued in a moment of silence, as they continued to see the kong children, whom they still had in sight.

"Do you know that we are leaving here soon too?" another of the animals said.

"Really?" Dixie asked, turning to look at them along with Diddy. "From this shelter?"

"Exactly... Several of us already feel pretty good; we'll go to make our lives new," one of the animals added, sighing and smiling along with the others.

"Wow, that's great," Diddy said, smiling at them. "But will you still be on this same island or somewhere else?"

"Some do, and some don't; some don't even live here anymore and took their own paths, others even ran into someone from their families or acquaintances and returned with them. But yeah... we can say that we've also recovered after so much... And you know? It's all been thanks to you two."

Diddy and Dixie looked at each other as if they were confused at first, but then looked back at the animals.

"To us?" Dixie asked, emitting a slight laugh.

"Yeah, it was really to you," one of the animals added, smiling at them. "First of all, you saved us from that dreadful circus, you also rescued the others from that boring zoo."

"And not only that," another of the animals added cheerfully. "You also rescued all those ape children and your teacher Pinky, at the cost of fighting that group of evil apes... And you even completely stopped those criminal tamers, ruined all their success and their filthy plans. You guys are real heroes, seriously!"

"Hey, hey, not like that either," Diddy replied with a few small laughs before speaking calmly again. "I mean... we just did what we could to try to help you all... Even some things were also

thanks to your help, such as rescuing those children and Mr. Pinky in the end," he added, smiling at them.

"But it wouldn't have been without you either," one of the animals added, also emitting a small laugh. "Seriously, you guys are amazing. You're a great duo. You really function as a couple and as a team," they told them before immediately changing his expression. "Oh! Uhh... Sorry, you're *still a couple*, right?"

Diddy and Dixie looked at each other with some embarrassment, and at the same time avoiding blushing.

"Uhh... no," Diddy replied with a forced smile, "actually, no," he added, earning a few astonished looks from the animals.

"Oh, excuse me, excuse me, seriously," one of the animals hurried to say with an embarrassed expression.

"No, don't worry," Dixie said, smiling with the same expression. "Everything is okay... Diddy and I are still good friends."

"Oh, but excuse the imprudence anyway," they said before smiling again. "But yeah, you two are a great team. You've really saved us, and many more ones," they added, smiling more calmly. "You're great little monkeys... We'll genuinely be grateful to you."

"Oh, it's nothing," Diddy replied, smiling at them too. "We're glad we helped you all."

"And we hope that you continue staying well," Dixie added in the same way, "that you are truly happy after all you've been through."

The animals returned the cheerful gesture to both little kongs. Later, Mr. Pinky appeared next to the two, alongside the apes of the shelter.

"Alright, kids," Mr. Pinky said, smiling. "Will we go now?"

Diddy and Dixie smiled back and nodded, before saying goodbye to the herd of animals and apes there.

It was already the afternoon hours, when Mr. Pinky along with Diddy and Dixie had arrived at his house. Mr. Pinky seemed to do something normal to return, as if it was already something he expected. But for Diddy and Dixie, it seemed to be an exciting moment to be able to go back up to that house, as if they had lived there for a long time; they both sped up the stairs like little children. Then, Mr. Pinky helped them by opening the door of their room, which was new because those evil apes had knocked down the previous one. Diddy and Dixie entered their room and observed it in detail; everything was as it was, except that there were several tree leaves on the floor.

Later, they went up to Mr. Pinky's house, which was in the same condition, although it also had several leaves on the floor or on the furniture. Diddy and Dixie remembered leaving it clean in the last few days they were there, but they assumed that leaving it abandoned had consequences.

Mr. Pinky decided to clean his house, while Diddy and Dixie helped him by ordering some things. Meanwhile, the two talked to him in greater detail about everything that had happened since he had left. Even, although with a little embarrassment, they told him certain details by which the whole journey originated, with which Mr. Pinky better understood several things that Diddy and Dixie had not finished explaining in the shelter. They even told him several antecedents that happened since they were still on DK Island.

"And then it was that you and those children were back in your five senses," Diddy said, finishing telling everything. "The truth is that, coming from those apes, we doubted that that mixture would work, but in the end, it turned out to be true."

"Geez, I swear I never imagined that all that would happen," the teacher said as he sat on the couch to take a break, as did Diddy and Dixie, who sat on the other couches. "First of all, I didn't even know that Miss Dixie knew those same tamers and those mandrills and orangutans before... And Mr. Jemky and company were even their children? Well, adopted children... and may they all rest in peace now... Oh, no, and I've really felt very sorry especially for those guys, I don't know what to think."

"We've thought the same," Diddy said earnestly. "And believe us, it was quite hard to see that end of them; not even when we fought them at gunpoint did we feel so sorry for them."

"But anyway, they're resting now..." Dixie added in the same way. "And I could never forgive those mandrills and orangutans, but maybe what happened to them in the end was the best option; with all that life they had, resting is the best thing for them. And those darn tamers will pay for it *for the rest of their lives...* and even they will no longer live so long."

"Oh, and not to mention Miss Jenny and company," Mr. Pinky added, hand to his temple. "Were they not even *them really*? I already said before and I didn't know if I was crazy, but I saw something strange in those children. And it turns out that they were actually controlled by Mr. Jemky and company."

"And we were so afraid to run into them again," Diddy said. "And we had them closer than we thought."

"Oh, but... what a great pity also for the other four little ones," Mr. Pinky said, shaking his head from side to side. "They were just innocent creatures; how could those monstrous tamers do such an atrocity to them? And they were going to do the same with all those other kids."

"And by the way, mister..." Dixie said, "so, were you also part of that organization?"

Mr. Pinky gave a huge sigh, while putting his hand to his temple quite seriously.

"I was..." he replied, "and that really was a complete hell. I talk about this with so few ones; it's not something I can do, but as you guys have found it out... well, yes... Those scoundrels who covered up as just circus tamers, took me with them when I was very little and lived in a circus with my parents and my brother. It was years of torture and mistreatment, forced to do atrocities, and me trying to save the animals I could, at the cost of earning severe punishments... Until that opportunity was given to get free of all that; I invited those mandrills and orangutans to do the same, but they ignored me; they even kept looking for me or threatening me because of it... I've even had to hide from them, that's why I've changed residence several times... Oh, no, guys, I hope you're not going to see me in some bad way after this."

"No, don't worry, mister," Diddy replied in a tone of compassion. "We understand that you in the end took a good path; what's more... you were always *different* from all those apes, from what we see. It was really brave of you to have really survived all that."

"But well... it seems that at least it's over definitively," Mr. Pinky said, emitting another sigh. "I hope those human beasts really pay; you already made them pay... Geez, guys, and you two have really managed something so... *incredible*; I mean... you stopped *those criminals*. I'm really still surprised," he added, smiling back for a couple of seconds. "Seriously, forgive me, excuse me if I underestimated you several times."

"You must not apologize, mister," Diddy said with the same gesture. "You didn't underestimate us; all that journey wasn't easy for us either."

"Yeah, I don't know how we came out alive," Dixie added in the same way. "By the way, mister... did you also come from another circus?"

"That's right," the teacher replied. "I was born there, in fact. I lived with my parents and my twin brother, yes... he was my twin, although our fur was a different color, but then it changed me as I grew up. And the truth is, that circus wasn't entirely pretty either."

"And just in case, don't you know something about your family?" Diddy asked curiously.

"Well... I couldn't say exactly; I haven't seen them in a long time. Although I don't know if it's my idea, but... I feel like maybe my brother is no longer in this world, and my parents may be in their old age... I don't know, but I sense it."

"And you've never tried to look for them?" Dixie asked.

"I've tried, but I didn't think it was a good idea," the teacher replied before sighing again. "I lived at the risk of being found by those mandrills and orangutans; if I looked for my family, I'd have put them at risk as well. And if I run into them one day, maybe I'll just see them from afar... I wouldn't want them to know the fate I had after I was taken from that circus. I'd be glad just to know that they're well and are having a dignified old age."

"Oh..." Dixie exclaimed along with Diddy. "Although you could do it; I mean... you can try now that all the bad things are over."

"Who knows," the teacher said, looking out a window. "Or maybe time will tell..."

The three of them were silent for a while, as they now looked down at the floor. Diddy and Dixie couldn't stop thinking about everything Mr. Pinky had to have been through; they got the idea that perhaps that explained a lot of the attitude they characterized him with before, although that has already been in the past. But after all, they both felt some relief; maybe it was the fact of being back in that house or the fact of being able to talk with Mr. Pinky after so long, which had not been so long, but with everything that happened it seemed to be.

"Hey, kids," the teacher said after a while. "And changing the topic, you'll go to your DK Island soon, right? I was going to tell you that next week travel to distant areas will be enabled again, according to what the shelter owners told me, since the hurricane is gone. Of course, they'll still wait this week to make sure everything is okay."

"Of course," Diddy replied with a smile again. "We wanted to ask you that too. How can we leave?"

"We just have to talk to the travel service apes," the teacher replied. "If you want, I can take you... Or do you think you two can go on your own on that trip?"

"Whatever is easiest for you, mister," Dixie replied with a shrug. "I don't think we have a problem going on our own; we'd just need to be sure we know where DK Island is."

"Well, in the service office they have maps to know it; you can consult it there. Just one thing, I think the boats don't go exactly to DK Island, but they can leave you near there."

"Then we'll go and ask tomorrow," Diddy said.

"Okay, then call me if you need me to help you with something," the teacher said, smiling at them, before getting up from the couch later and stretching a little. "Well, kids... I think I'll go and rest for a while, so excuse me."

Diddy and Dixie nodded, and then said goodbye to Mr. Pinky for the moment. Afterwards, they both left his house. It was already the sunset hours, which made them want to stay at home at so much tranquility.

Later, Diddy and Dixie had nothing to do after so much, so they decided to go up to the final terrace of the house. In the same way as they went up to the house, they climbed at speed towards the terrace. Upon arrival, they both smiled again as they were able to return to that place where they used to hang out frequently.

Then, both went to look out over the railings of the terrace, where they stopped to observe the environment of the island from that height.

"Ahh, I didn't think I'd miss this place," Dixie said, looking around, smiling. "So long without seeing this."

"So much? But it's only been about two weeks," Diddy said with a few small laughs. "Hey, but joking aside, it does seem like a lot of time has passed. When was the last time we were here in the house?"

"Let's see if I remember," Dixie replied pensively. "Ah, yeah, it was when..." Dixie changed her expression immediately after remembering *what* that last time was. "Oh, no... I remembered."

"Uhh, do you mean at that same time when all that drama happened that made us break up?" Diddy said, crossing his arms and with a mocking look.

"Oh, hey, I didn't want to say it," Dixie replied, giving him a little push and looking embarrassed.

"Hey, and what would you have thought if we had run into here in the house that time?" Diddy asked with a small laugh.

"That you'd want to apologize to me or something," Dixie replied with the same mocking look. "And I don't even know if I was going to accept you at that moment."

"Hey, I was just coming to tell you what I had discovered about the Jennies," he said, shrugging with a little laugh. "I mean, I wasn't on good terms with you either, but... you were the only one I

thought I'd go to for a serious situation like that.”

Dixie gave a few small laughs as well, and then Diddy played along, before the two of them fell silent again. Then, Dixie just breathed a sigh more calmly.

"It was a stupid fight, after all," Dixie said with a shrug. "All so that in the end it turns out that those four bullies just were taking us for fools... May they rest in peace, by the way.”

"Actually, yes," Diddy added, speaking more calmly, too. "Not knowing that worse things would come; I don't even know what to think about them anymore... But well, we can say it's over.”

"I don't know how we did it," Dixie said after a while, as they looked out over the landscape, "but we did... I never thought that we'd defeat those apes and those criminal tamers. Those who continue to give me some pities are those four kids... and even more so the other four ones.”

"So do I," Diddy added in the same way and getting serious. "All of them had a terrible fate; they weren't to blame for having been dealt those lives. We didn't know the real Jennies, but we did hear Jemky and company say that they'd rather never have existed.”

"Maybe that last thing those apes told them is true:... they didn't think about the future or that they didn't have lives to have children," Dixie said before looking down and then looking back into nothingness. Later, she continued. "And you know? That gets me thinking... that maybe my parents, may they rest in peace... didn't think about it either... and maybe neither did my aunt and uncle; or maybe they did think so, but not completely... They didn't think we also lived with risks... like most wild animals that we are.”

Diddy turned to look at her with a serious expression, before emitting a sigh and looking back into nothingness.

"And maybe... neither do mine," Diddy said with his gaze lowered. "We have also lived in the midst of so many risks.”

Dixie made the same gesture and then looked at Diddy quite compassionately. Then, Diddy placed a hand on her shoulder.

"But... we can't change anything anymore," Dixie said, before breathing another sigh. "And we only have to... keep going while we can.”

"At least we're still alive... and we're going home soon," Diddy added, smiling a little. "We made and will continue to get through this, Dix.”

Dixie smiled back affectionately, and then gave him a quick light hug.

"We made it together," Dixie said, smiling at him.

"Yeah, we're a great team as we were told then," Diddy said, returning to a more cheered up tone.

"*Just* a team," Dixie replied in the same tone.

The two gave off a light and short laugh as they looked at each other closely. Then, Diddy took Dixie's hand and held it for a while on the railing, while smiling at her. Dixie smiled back, and then rested her head on his shoulder, as they continued to look at each other... But suddenly, both

changed their expression and settled back normally, while they were both blushing at the closeness they were having; they hadn't even realized they had got themselves that way.

"Uhh... Ah, I'm sorry," Diddy said, smiling so shyly.

"Uhh, no, no... it's okay," Dixie replied, showing herself in the same way. "I was just-"

"Diddy! Dixie!"

Both changed their expressions after hearing that some voices had called them from afar. Those voices seemed to come from below, so they looked in that direction. Suddenly, they realized that there were some animals of the herd waiting for them.

They immediately went down the tree of the house to talk to the herd, whom they greeted as soon as they saw.

"Hi, friends," the animals said cheerfully.

"Hi, how are you?" Diddy and Dixie replied in kind. "What's going on? How has everything been over there?"

"Everything has gone well," one of the animals replied, smiling. "A few of the ape children have already been handed over to their families; they had no problem and left happy with them. But as for others... it turns out that what you were told about those children has been true," they added, changing to a seriousness.

"What? Seriously?" Diddy exclaimed along with Dixie.

"Yes, some of them told us very awful stories," another of the animals said seriously. "There are some children who say they're afraid to return home, others don't even want to return to their families, others live alone with their siblings, and others don't even have someone waiting for them."

"Oh, no, how terrible," Dixie said, looking astonished. "So, it was true. But only a few of them or quite a few?"

"Most of them," another animal replied. "Only about eight children have already been handed over to their families; the rest haven't yet been handed over... But the apes in the shelter are going to help them, don't worry," they added, smiling a little later. "They'll provide assistance to all those children, including their families if they don't have so many serious problems with them; the children who have no one can be kept in the shelter until they find a family for them, obviously making sure they're treated well, otherwise they'll have them in the shelter until they can make their lives on their own. They'll even help the little siblings of the girl you used to call 'Mandy'."

"Oh, that sounds less bad," Diddy said, smiling a little again. "They're going to do a great job of helping all of them, after all."

"It's good that at least something can be done for all of them," Dixie added in the same way.

"Because... there really must be many children who need help. We're seriously glad that they can help them."

"That's how we hope it'll be. We really have to help those kids," another of the animals said in the same way. "Hey, and changing the topic a bit, we wanted to ask you something... What day will you go to your DK Island?"

"The other week, Mr. Pinky told us," Diddy replied. "He said that there will already be trips to distant areas, although they don't go directly to DK Island, but near there."

"Well, because we wanted to tell you something... We were thinking of fixing that ship you made, so you can leave on your own if you want."

"Really?" Dixie asked them with a look of strangeness. "And does it still exist?"

"Yeah, we left it on one of the beaches when we arrived. It only has some damage, but we wanted to repair it again for you, what do you say?"

"Well, in that case we'd have to talk to Mr. Pinky," Dixie replied, shrugging and smiling. "Although we must also see how to get to DK Island. But it's not so broken, is it?"

"No, it only has some damages, but we could fix them," one of the animals replied, before smiling at them. "You can take it as an act of gratitude to you."

"You're not going to kidnap us later, are you?" Diddy jokingly told them. "Those four kids told us the same thing last time."

"Hey, of course not," another of the animals replied with a little laugh. "But what do you think?"

"It sounds good," Dixie replied, smiling. "Just as we said, we must first see if we can get there... And by the way, can we help you too?"

"Oh, no, don't worry. You won't have to do anything."

"Come on, we want to help you," Diddy told them with a smile. "We're the ones who are going to go there, after all."

"Well, okay, okay," one of the animals replied. "Okay, so, we'll let you know tomorrow as soon as we start, are you ok with it?"

Diddy and Dixie nodded their heads smilingly, while the animals showed themselves in the same way.

Chapter 94: The Last Week

The next week was pretty quiet for Diddy and Dixie; they hadn't had days like that in so long, and it felt so nice for them to have them again after so many overwhelming moments.

Although on the other hand, there were laborious days in that week, and as the animals had told them, they set out to repair that ship they had made long ago with the kong children. And it turned out to be true; this one had some damage in several parts, but with a little maintenance it could work again; it wasn't that hard after all. Diddy and Dixie were initially hesitant to go alone on that trip, but after all, it was what they intended to do the first few days they arrived on Hurricane Island. They also informed Mr. Pinky about it, who at first wanted to be doubtful, but after a while, he decided not to underestimate them anymore and just supported the idea, and even helped them with the indications.

During those days, Diddy and Dixie went to visit the animal shelter as they used to. Sometimes, they even socialized with the kong children they had rescued, although without establishing great friendships, because they two were no longer going to stay for long on the island. As they had mentioned, a few children were no longer in that shelter and had gone with their families, but most of them still stayed in that place while the apes of the shelter gave them help and assistance, since those children did live in situations like the ones that had been told to Diddy and Dixie.

The rescued kong children all had different and noticeable personalities, which Diddy and Dixie found curious, compared to how they were when they were building that ship while they all were hypnotized; each one of them even looked quite expressive, unlike the previous time.

Among other activities, Diddy and Dixie spent time with Mr. Pinky telling stories, helping him with some chores or also preparing something to eat, as they used to do before. Diddy and Dixie already missed those quiet days like the ones they were in the first weeks of being on Hurricane Island, even if they didn't see them that way back then. Both also used to go for a walk, although they no longer wanted to move so far from the house, as they felt somewhat insecure about the possibility of encountering something that could bring them trouble again.

Chapter 95: Existing Feelings

That week was over, and Diddy and Dixie were at Mr. Pinky's house. They had managed to get through that week without problems; they could not stop counting the time they had left to be able to leave for DK Island, as they wanted so much. At the same time, they knew that leaving that island would cause them something, where they spent quiet and happy moments, as well as others not so nice... and others who led them into terrible situations. But after all, returning to DK Island and seeing their relatives again couldn't stop to make them excited for the moment to arrive.

Both were on the floor of their room reading some comics that Mr. Pinky had lent them from the beginning, along with several comics around them on the floor. Throughout that week, both stayed at home to rest at night in their room while reading something, playing board games or talking. That was their last night there.

"I don't understand how it could end up that way," Diddy commented as he flipped through the last page of the comic they were reading. "The gorilla was supposed to always be there for Super Monkey Kong; wasn't that what they had promised?"

"He wasn't his friend after all," Dixie added in the same way. "He turned out to be a traitor to him and just wanted to use him to carry out his macabre plan."

"That gorilla gave me a bad feeling from the beginning; I already said before that so much kindness in excess was very suspicious and in order to get something from him... Geez, where have we seen this before?"

Suddenly, the door to the room was knocked, causing them both to get up to open it, assuming it was Mr. Pinky.

"Yeah, mister?" Diddy said when they saw him.

"Hey, kids," Mr. Pinky replied, "I was just coming to ask you if you have everything ready for tomorrow. You'll leave in the afternoon, right?"

"That's right, mister," Dixie replied, nodding her head. "And everything is ready; we already loaded enough fruits to eat and water to drink."

"Okay, because I remind you that on a ship it'll take more than just one or two whole days to get there, so make sure to take plenty of food."

"Don't worry, mister," Diddy said. "We'll take more than enough food."

"That's good," the teacher said, smiling at them. "And right, something else. It's that I wanted to ask you a favor for your trip; just... it's something that you must be very careful with when carrying it."

"Really? About what?" Dixie asked, looking at him a little strangely.

"Well... it's for Mrs. Wrinkly, in fact," the teacher replied. "It's some documents that were sent from the community of teachers, and I must send them to her. Oh, and there's something for Mr. Cranky, too, so make sure he gets it too."

"For Cranky?" Diddy asked with a little laugh. "And why him?"

"Uh, well... They sent that to him too," the teacher replied with a shrug. "I have no idea why, but some teachers have been sent those documents for them and their spouses, so you must take that to both of them. I'll keep them in a box, but please, I just want to ask you *not to open it*," he said, emphatically. "Those documents are serious and of the utmost importance; they must remain intact until they reach their recipient, okay?"

"Okay, mister," Dixie replied. "Then we'll take it to them, don't worry."

"Okay, kids," the teacher said, still smiling. Then, he took out a small object from his pocket before showing it to the two. "Oh, and one last thing, I wanted to give you this... It'll be useful for your journey."

Diddy and Dixie took the object he was offering them. It was a round object and had letters and needles that rotated as they held it.

"Is this a *compass*?" Diddy asked as he took it.

"That's right; you do remember how it works, right?" the teacher said before seeing some confused faces in Diddy and Dixie. "Or don't worry, I'll teach you tomorrow. With that and with the maps you were given at the post office, you'll be able to navigate to your DK Island."

"Okay, mister," Dixie replied. "Thanks a lot."

"Well, kids," the teacher said before taking a few steps back. "So, I leave you; rest well... Tomorrow will be your day."

"See you later, mister," Diddy replied, smiling along with Dixie. "Rest well too."

Afterwards, Mr. Pinky completely retreated, and Diddy closed the door of the room again.

"I think it's time to sleep too," Diddy said, stretching a little as he walked back to where the comics were. "Why don't we pick all this up now? Or do we keep reading any of them?"

"I'm not sleepy yet," Dixie replied with a shrug. "Although there's nothing left to read; we're done... By the way, let me see that," she added, taking the compass from Diddy's hands and then observing it.

"Do you know how to use it?" Diddy asked, joining in to take a look at it as well.

"I just remember Mrs. Wrinkly's class," Dixie replied as she continued to stare at it. "But I have never used one."

"As far as I remember, it always pointed to the North," Diddy added. Then, he went to some of the comics on the floor and started picking them up.

Dixie finished observing the compass and put it next to a wall. Afterwards, she also joined in picking up the comics to leave them piled up near the same wall. Diddy went to sit next to the comics, and then Dixie joined him to arrange them all as Mr. Pinky had given them to them.

"This will be the last night we sleep here," Dixie said as they sorted the magazines. "Tomorrow at this hour we may already be sleeping on DK Island... Or well, maybe on the ship too, as it'll be a

long trip.”

"Oh, no, I feel like all that trip will be pretty tiring and boring," Diddy replied in kind. "Well, but I prefer that to some tragedy or some obstacle in the way."

"I hope not," Dixie added before stopping to rest and retaking the compass to watch it for a while. "I already want to see everyone there on DK Island."

"Me too," Diddy said, finishing sorting out the last magazine to stack them aside. "Everyone there must already be waiting for us; it's been a little over three weeks as we told them in the letters."

"It's really been a long time. Especially the previous two weeks that were terrible; I felt like they were endless."

"And you and I spent about three or four days sleeping," Diddy added, stopping to rest as well. "Oh, no, they were terrible days."

Dixie leaned her head on Diddy's shoulder, as she continued to fiddle the compass. Diddy, on the other hand, just picked up one of the comics again and gave it a second look since they didn't have anything else to do.

"What will we do during the trip in case we get bored?" Dixie asked as she kept leaning on Diddy.

"Well... I'd say sleep to make time pass quickly," Diddy replied in a mocking tone as he looked at the magazine. "Well, I don't know, honestly; joking aside... I'd say making sure the ship doesn't veer off course or crash. Or we could also come up with a game; we'll think of something to do surely."

"Will we play just you and me?" Dixie asked with a little laugh.

"And with whom else? With the wind?" Diddy said jokingly, before putting the magazine back in place.

Both remained silent for a while, while sleep was already taking hold of them. Then, Dixie looked up at Diddy, just before he did the same. Suddenly... the two of them felt a slight acceleration in their heartbeat as they realized that they were quite close. Dixie had already realized first, though for some reason... she did not decide to step aside this time. Diddy, on the other hand, was in a state of not knowing what to do, although to tell the truth, he felt so comfortable close to Dixie that he did not want to move aside if she did not either.

Suddenly, Dixie could catch Diddy's staring into her eyes and her entire face. She felt her heartbeat getting stronger and stronger and, as if she suddenly had some kind of impulse, she brought her face up to Diddy's and... without thinking any more, she laid her lips on his, closing her eyes. Instantly, Diddy felt a huge fluttering in his stomach, and his heartbeat accelerated more due the sudden event. Dixie parted immediately, realizing what she had just done, and wondered if that had been okay.

The two of them remained without doing anything as they continued to stare at each other, when suddenly, Diddy took Dixie's hand quite subtly. As if she had no turning back, Dixie approached him again and took his face to reunite her lips with his... this time being reciprocated by Diddy, who couldn't help but join in that sweet kiss with her. They parted soon after, before looking at each other as if they didn't know where to go, but at the same time, feeling so good being there. Then,

Diddy took Dixie's face and, as if they already had put everything aside, they both closed their eyes and put their lips together in another warm kiss, this time enjoying it while letting themselves be carried away by all their emotions they had at that moment.

When they parted, they couldn't stop staring at each other and staying so close; deep down... they missed being like that with each other too much.

"Dix..." Diddy said as he continued to hold her face and caress her affectionately.

"Diddy..." Dixie replied, still looking into his eyes... But suddenly, her expression changed after rethinking what had just happened, and her face turned flushed with embarrassment as she tried to move aside. "Oh, no, no, sorry... We shouldn't; it's not right anymore."

"No, no, it's okay..." Diddy hurried to try to calm her down and smile at her a little, although he didn't know what to do either and just took her hands again while staring at her. "Dixie, I... I still love you."

While both of them already knew of their still-existing feelings, Dixie couldn't help but feel another acceleration in her heartbeat after hearing Diddy, as if he was telling her that for the first time. Unable to keep it to herself as well, she intertwined her fingers with Diddy's and settled to stay in front of him.

"I... I love you too, Diddy," she said with all certainty and smiling at him a little later.

Then, being a few centimeters close, both let themselves be carried away by that closeness and kissed once more, as if nothing else mattered at that moment and while Diddy caressed Dixie's hair. Truth be told, it wasn't the first time during that week that something like that was about to happen, and they both knew it. But this time... they just let it happen; deep down, they did want it to happen, no matter how much they tried to think otherwise.

But suddenly, Diddy stopped and separated from Dixie, which earned a look of strangeness from her.

"Uh... No, Dixie," he said with some insecurity and looking away for a while. "It's true... W-we must not do this; we can no longer... We had agreed to it... I'm sorry."

Diddy looked at her again quite seriously and shyly, while Dixie didn't know what else to do at that moment. Then, she lowered her gaze while heaving a sigh.

"It's true..." Dixie said. "But... Oh, I don't know," she added before turning around and remaining silent for a while. "Uhh, I think... we better go to sleep now."

Dixie looked at him the same way again for a second, before looking away and getting up. Diddy, on his part, didn't know what to think either; on the one hand, he had felt so excited to have Dixie so close again, but at the same time, the excitement vanished when he remembered the conversation they had had about leaving things there, and just continuing to be good friends as always.

Then, Diddy got up too, left everything settled, and headed towards his hammock. Dixie, on her part, was already lying in her respective hammock as well. When Diddy settled into his, he directed his gaze towards Dixie, who also returned it to him with the same expression.

"Rest well, Dix," Diddy said shyly, before giving her a short smile.

"You too..." she replied, smiling back, before settling down to sleep.

Diddy finished settling in too and started closing his eyes to try to sleep... Although this time, he did not get it easily; he could not stop thinking about the matter and no longer knew how to feel. He had even put aside the excitement of being the last night they would sleep there... His thoughts returned to Dixie.

Dixie was also trying to sleep... but she couldn't at first either; she didn't know how to feel either. On the one hand, it had been quite nice for her to be with Diddy in a loving way... but that was the problem: they were no longer a couple, and they both knew it. But at the same time, she could not stop thinking at that moment; she still loved him, she could not deny it, and he loved her too, and he had told her... They both knew it too.

Later, and as expected anyway, sleep had already taken over both in their respective hammocks, so they fell asleep, thinking again about the next day, which would be the last on that island.

Chapter 96: Starting Again

Dawn had arrived and, finally... it was the last day. It was just a matter of time before the two little kongs could begin their trip back. They decided to schedule it for the sunset hours, as the trip lasted more than a whole day, and it would be somewhat risky to spend the night far from Hurricane Island in case of any emergencies.

They both got up early that day and ate together with Mr. Pinky as usual. The two had decided not to talk about the topic of the previous night anymore; they just wanted to continue as usual.

Later, both went with Mr. Pinky to the animal shelter, since that day they had to make some last observations to the ship where they planned to sail, in addition to boarding more food to take on the trip. The ship was anchored by a low cliff near the shelter, so they would have no problem moving around.

After that, they stayed another while in the shelter. Mr. Pinky had returned home, while Diddy and Dixie stayed longer. Both were reunited with some of the rescued kong children, with whom they had already spoken and spent some time during that week.

"And so, you won't come back here anymore?" one of the kong children asked them.

"I don't think so now," Diddy replied. "Considering that our island is too far, too far away. Even the way we got here had been because of that hurricane storm."

"Oh, we won't see you again then," a girl in the herd added. "I thought you were going to return later... Are you going to come back someday?"

"Well, who knows," Dixie said, shrugging and smiling. "Maybe by fate we'll pass through here again... Although of course, I hope it's not again because of a storm."

"Diddy! Dixie!" a voice different to those who were gathered exclaimed.

Diddy and Dixie were the first to turn to see who was calling them; it was some of their animal friends there.

"Yeah, what's going on?" Diddy asked them.

"There was a small mishap with some pieces of the ship and we wanted to ask you if you can help us, since we cannot reach it... And you're small."

"Okay, we'll be there in a while," Diddy replied along with Dixie.

Diddy and Dixie temporarily said goodbye to the children, and then went to accompany the animals that had called them.

When they arrived, they had noticed that a part of the sails had detached from the masts and, as the animals told them, just the two of them could reach it due to their small sizes and their primate ability to climb. Diddy and Dixie were each with a group of animals, as they were two separate parts where they had to intervene.

At a time when Diddy had lowered the piece from the mast, he reunited with the animals, who were going to help him make adjustments to the parts that had broken down. Dixie was with another group of animals, fixing another piece.

Meanwhile, Diddy along with the animals that were with him, were on some rocks, trying to fix the pieces separately. At first, he was quietly concentrating on making the necessary adjustments to the piece, when suddenly, and he did not know why... his thoughts turned to *Dixie*. Ever since he woke up, he couldn't stop thinking about *that* moment they had shared the night before. He hadn't felt that way in a while; even in the previous days he had spent most of his time with Dixie and everything had been normal, even in the moments alone with her. Then, he turned to look at her for a while in the distance; he couldn't deny it at all... He still loved her.

"Hey, Diddy!" one of the animals called him, causing him a small fright and breaking the thread of his thoughts. "What's going on?" they added with a little laugh.

"Uhh, no, nothing, why?" Diddy replied with a forced smile.

"You're a little quiet and you stood as if you had been hypnotized," another of the animals said with a slight laugh. "Uhh, is something going on? We've seen you like this since you arrived."

"Are you worried about the trip?" another of the animals asked.

"Ahh, yes... Yeah, that too," Diddy replied with a forced smile, before changing his expression. "Uh, I meant... Yeah, it's because of the trip."

The animals looked at each other, and then looked at him strangely at his reaction.

"What do you mean with *too*?" they asked him, raising their brows. "By any chance... it's not about Dixie or is it?"

Diddy felt an instant flutter inside him after being suddenly found out.

"What are you saying? No," Diddy replied with a forced look of strangeness and trying to sound direct, but in the end, it didn't go so well, as the animals looked at him more deeply, as if noticing his forced reactions. "Ugh, well... It's nothing serious, don't worry. Why do you ask, by the way?"

"It's that... you stared at her just now," one of the animals said, raising their brows. "In fact, it's not the first time this week you've stood still like that."

"Ohh, do you still love each other?" another of the animals said playfully, giving Diddy small pushes.

"Hey, no, of course not anymore," Diddy replied with a few small laughs in the same way, before speaking more calmly. "Well, not that way; we're just still friends like before, that's all."

"And by the way, can I ask... why did you two break up?" the animals asked him with some curiosity, but at the same time, discreetly. "Uhh, if you don't mind me asking, of course... Wasn't it because of that issue with that orangutan boy and the girl you used to call Jenny, or was it?"

"No, it wasn't because of that," Diddy replied. "I mean, we had broken up for that in the beginning, but that's already obsolete; we already clarified it and apologized for misinterpreting it. We actually decided to leave it all there because... in the end our relationship was what got us on this whole

journey, and it has also made us have silly conflicts that we didn't have before, and that's not what we want. Just look at that misunderstanding; those things didn't happen to us before when we were just friends."

"Really?" one of the animals exclaimed with a look of weirdness, but then changed his expression. "I mean, but then you two still love each other, don't you?... You still love her, right?"

Diddy was just silent for a few seconds, and looked away as he put his hands to his temple. Then, he adopted an expression of seriousness.

"The truth is that... yes," Diddy replied with a look of sincerity. "And yeah."

"Hey, and then why didn't you continue?" they asked him again. "I mean... do you know if she still loves you too?"

"Well, yes, too," Diddy replied without hiding this time. "In fact... we have told each other and we have talked about it. But no... I don't want us to risk it again."

"Diddy, but what are you saying? So, there's still something between the two of you?... And why don't you consider getting back together and starting things anew?"

"No, no, I don't think it's the best thing now," Diddy added, denying with his head. "I don't want us to have any more mishap like the ones we had and that makes us argue and drift apart, let alone putting us in danger. I just want... her to be well, to be happy, and so am I... For us to be well."

"Oh, I see... But don't you really consider giving each other another chance? I mean, you just said... *that you two still love each other*, that you still have feelings for each other... Even if you start anew, you could do much better; you'd have learned from those bad times."

"You were a lovely couple," another of the animals added. "I think that love between two ones should only end if one or both of them no longer feel anything, or if they have been disloyal, or if they have treated each other very badly. But you... you've been there for each other, always stayed together, even in those terrible situations... and even being on bad terms, you never completely abandoned each other and always knew how to take care of each other... Isn't that what couples do?"

"But it's that..." Diddy said, lowering his gaze. "I don't know... What if something happens again and we drift apart?"

"But you surely will do better, much more if both do your part and if there's still love between the two. Just look, even in the recent situations you didn't drift apart; you're still staying together... Tell me, Diddy, wouldn't you want to get back together with her again?"

"Well, I'm not going to lie to you either," Diddy replied with some shyness, "I'd love for us to get back, but... Oh, I don't know. We're not experts in this love thing."

"And why not give it a try then? Come on, your love will be stronger than before; everything will be much better, in fact... I believe no one is *completely* an expert in love. Even she'd be happy to start anew with you."

"Do you... believe that?" Diddy asked, smiling a little.

"Of course, if you two want, yes," one of the animals replied, looking at him with encouragement. "Diddy... this world and this life already have many awful things, why not give yourselves the opportunity to be happy if you can be happy together?"

"If you two want, of course," another of the animals added. "It's your decision after all; if there is still love and interest between the two. So... you can try to talk to her, or look for a good time when something happens and you talk about it. What do you say?"

"Well, I don't know," Diddy replied, still smiling with some confusion. "Maybe time will tell."

"Time you say?" one of the animals asked, smiling at him with a look of strangeness. "But you said it: you two *still love each other*; it's up to you two now. Besides, not to sound negative, but... I don't think one can just be friends with someone if there's still something between the two, or at least it's so difficult."

"I know... and it actually is," Diddy replied as he took the piece he was fixing. "But seriously, I don't know yet."

"Well, as we said: it's your decision and hers, after all," another of the animals said, smiling at him. "And if you don't end up together, well, that's okay too... At least you've managed to stay on good terms."

Diddy smiled at them too, before continuing to make adjustments to the piece along with his animal friends.

Later, Diddy and Dixie had returned to Mr. Pinky's house. He had prepared a special meal for the two of them, as that would be the last time he would share meal time with them. Both had a good time, especially because they loved the days when Mr. Pinky prepared some special dish, and this time, they were on the highest terrace of the house.

"So... this will be it, kids," Mr. Pinky said before settling into his seat with his plate. "The last moments I'll see you."

"This will be our last lunch, I guess," Diddy said with a small smile along with Dixie.

The three of them began to eat without thinking about it anymore. The moment they tasted the food was quite pleasant, which consisted of bananas. Diddy and Dixie had eaten pretty fast unlike Mr. Pinky. When they finished, they were going to get up and retreat, until they remembered another detail.

"Oh, we forgot dessert," Mr. Pinky said as he hadn't finished eating.

"It's true, and I think we hadn't even finished it," Dixie added.

"I'll go get it, okay?" Diddy said, getting up too. "Do I also bring those colorful dishes that look like trays?"

"If you can, Mr. Diddy," Mr. Pinky said.

Diddy went downstairs and went down to the house, retreating for a moment. Mr. Pinky continued to eat his lunch, while Dixie remained silent.

Suddenly, as she looked up at her dish, Dixie's mind played several thoughts, among them... about *Diddy*. In fact, during the time that had elapsed that day, her thoughts had not stopped reminding her... *of that moment* the previous night with him. And, although both had tried not to continue in that way, she well knew that the feelings *were still there*; they were present inside her, and it was clear that in Diddy too.

"Miss Dixie?" Mr. Pinky called her, interrupting her thoughts. "Uh, is everything okay?"

"Uhh, yes, why?" Dixie replied again, looking up and smiling.

"You were all static looking at your dish; what's wrong?" Mr. Pinky asked again with a look of strangeness. "By any chance... is everything okay with Mr. Diddy?"

Dixie inevitably opened her eyes to the fullest, but tried to be calm at the sudden question, although it had been in vain; Mr. Pinky looked at her more deeply.

"Uhh, yes, why are you asking?" Dixie said, still trying not to stutter.

"Well... just now, you stared at him until he left, and then you stared at your dish as if you were meditating," he replied, raising his brows. "Is... something wrong?"

"No, no, I don't know what you're talking about," Dixie repeated, shrugging and trying to sound natural.

"Hmm, it's that... Well, it's not that I want to get into your business, but... I have also seen that he stares at you in the same way sometimes; besides... I think I've seen you two worried; haven't you quarreled or something?"

"No, of course not, we're fine," Dixie replied with a forced smile. "I mean, it's nothing bad, just... I mean, yeah, we're fine."

Suddenly, Mr. Pinky raised his brows again and made a look of strangeness towards Dixie.

"Or maybe are you two still... *in love*?" he asked, deepening his gaze up.

Dixie felt a sudden flutter inside, and looked away, as she hurried to think about what to answer.

"Uh, no, that's not anymore," she replied, still with a forced smile. "Well... I don't know."

"Hmm, if you say so," the teacher said, shrugging and looking up. "And are you really just *friends* now?"

"Well, yes, we are," Dixie replied, holding her forced expression. But suddenly... she looked away again, and her expression changed; she felt like she couldn't fool herself anymore. Then, she glanced surreptitiously toward the stairs in case she heard Diddy return, before letting out a sigh. "Uhh, well... mister, the truth is... that I'd be lying to you... I think *there's still* something between the two of us," she said, rubbing her arm and staring down.

Dixie was somewhat embarrassed to have admitted it in that bout of honesty. Meanwhile, Mr. Pinky looked at her with some strangeness, but then gave a few small smiles.

"I already had thought about it," Mr. Pinky said. "And do you know if Mr. Diddy still feels the same way about you?"

"In fact... yes... He told me," Dixie replied, leaning against the table. "He even told me last night... that he still loved me, and I told him that too at that moment. But... I don't know what to do; I don't want us to have any problems because of us again; we want to be okay."

"But wait a minute, Miss Dixie," Mr. Pinky said, frowning. "You two decided to remain friends, didn't you? But... are you also telling me that you two still feel in love?"

"Oh, well, yes," Dixie replied, her gaze down. "And yeah, I am, and I can feel that he is too, but... we can no longer be like this; we were supposed to leave things at that and continue being friends as before... But it's hard... Or what would you say?"

"Well, it's that not to burst your bubble, Miss Dixie," Mr. Pinky replied, raising his brows, "but it's actually pretty unlikely that two individuals who still have feelings for each other can remain just friends; in the long run, it can even lead to terrible consequences, believe it or not."

"But..." Dixie replied, looking confused.

"And if you truly want your friendship to remain as it is... what you should do for the good of both is to distance yourselves for a long time, and meet again when you're sure that there are no romantic feelings from either of you... Uh, sorry to say it, but that's the truth."

"Are you serious?" Dixie asked, looking at him strangely and still confused.

"It's true, Miss Dixie," he replied with a shrug. "Let's see, can you answer me this question, with *honesty*: would you deep down like to be with Mr. Diddy again as a couple, or not?"

"Well... Actually, yes," Dixie replied again, lowering her gaze. "But it's that we fear having some conflict that would make us argue and drift apart again. We left things there for the well-being of both of us."

"Don't answer with 'but', just 'yes' or 'no'. Be honest with yourself."

"Well, yes... Yes, but it's that... Oh, well, yes," she replied earnestly, but with some shyness too.

"Well... then you must know this," Mr. Pinky said, shrugging before continuing. "Just imagine this situation: you still have feelings for Mr. Diddy, and deep down you still hope that something will resurface, and in the same way, he feels the same, but you two decide not to take things to another level for the *well-being of both*. Now, with that hope that you two still have, at some point that the two of you are alone, you'll get *affectionate again and behave as if you* still had a romance. Afterwards you'll stop to think that this is not right because actually you no longer have a romance, and you two will decide to continue as if nothing happened... and 'ah, for the well-being of both' will continue to promise not to get like that again. And that will be repeated a lot of times... Do you think that's going to make sense?"

Dixie didn't answer anything about it; she just looked at Mr. Pinky, and then looked back at her dish pensively. Inevitably, what Mr. Pinky had described, immediately reminded her of what had happened with Diddy the night before and how they two felt now.

"And *that*, Miss Dixie," the teacher said, raising a hand, "is not going to be good at all; you two will remain in an ambiguous relationship, and there may come a time when that causes you exhausting conflicts between the two, and is not that precisely what you two want to avoid?"

"But it's that... Oh, I don't know," Dixie replied, putting her hands to her temple and then raising her head again. "And then what? What do I do if nothing is good?... What do you think?"

"Well, in that case... only one of three choices, Miss Dixie," he replied, shrugging and shaking his head from side to side before continuing. "The first is that you remain as you are: that you remain friends and handle the situation with maturity; that implies: *never again* behaving like a couple and *being mindful* that at some point you two will go your separate ways; otherwise, that's *never* going to be healthy for you two... Because imagine if at some point, due to life's circumstances, Mr. Diddy has to go far away, or you do too; or imagine another scenario, where Mr. Diddy stops feeling for you and meets someone else and falls in love, or you also meet someone else; think about how it would be in such a situation if you two continue in the same half-hearted loving terms."

Dixie just became more confused and began to think much more about the situation she was having with Diddy. With Mr. Pinky's words, she began to imagine several quick scenarios that could happen to her, and that only tormented her more.

"Now, the second option," the teacher continued. "And this would indeed be something 'for the well-being of both': that you take a long time and distance themselves, obviously on good terms, of course. I know... quite difficult, since that implies not seeing each other or having contact perhaps for months or even years, until you're completely sure that you no longer feel any romantic feelings between the two. That's what you two could do if you really want well-being without the risk of ending up like two half-hearted lovers again... Difficult, isn't it?" he added with a sigh.

Dixie didn't know what else to think. Taking that second suggestion from Mr. Pinky was going to be almost impossible. Considering that her family and Diddy's family were now quite close, it was even going to be uncomfortable not to have any contact with Diddy for a long time, even considering that she would continue to see him in class and at Kong family events.

"And... what's the third?" Dixie asked, not knowing what else to do.

"I suppose that would be the easiest for both of you," the teacher replied, shrugging with a slight smile. "That you just go back to being a couple... Yes, formalizing your relationship again without further ado it's another option for you two. If you say that both of you still have feelings for each other, if you've been affectionate again, if deep down you still want to pick up where you left off, and if both of you agree and talk about it, then... do it, get back together... *But just one thing*: if you two choose that third option, you must approach it from your experience, with greater maturity."

"Oh, but wouldn't that also be going back to the beginning?" Dixie asked. "Or do you think it would be a good idea?"

"If you both agree, yes. But as I said: you both must start from what you have already learned. And I don't see it as a bad thing either; the two of you weren't a bad couple, you managed things well even in tough times."

"What if something happens to us again and in the same way we have any conflict like the ones we have gone through?"

"Hey, Miss Dixie... Look, I don't want to scare or discomfort you, but... certain things that happened to you both might happen again throughout your relationship, so it's pointless to worry about them so much. Or else... choose the second option, or even the first, but facing the consequences."

"Is it serious?" Dixie asked, becoming even more confused. "Oh, and then what? Why is nothing completely right? Why isn't there any alternative?"

"Miss Dixie, you see..." Mr. Pinky gave a little laugh, "in matters of love, there aren't really correct answers. I mean, there are answers that come pretty close to being right for it to work, but... it's not like everything is guaranteed; there's no perfection. Furthermore, those three options that I gave you, are not going to have those exact consequences either; they can vary quite a bit. I think you both should start by accepting that."

Dixie just dropped her head to the table, as she didn't know what else to say or think.

"Let's see, I'm going to try to help you," the teacher said before heaving a sigh. "Just for *this moment* don't think of any consequences and answer truthfully... *Which of the three options I told you would make you happiest?*... Honestly! Don't take into account the consequences for now, only what you really want."

"Well..." Dixie said, raising her head again and trying to think a little, even if she was clear about the answer. She didn't want to rush to answer what she really felt, but Mr. Pinky's staring was waiting for her to answer. Without thinking anything else, Dixie just made a sigh and lowered her gaze to answer. "Honestly... I would like Diddy and I to get back together; among those three options, I'd choose that one."

Mr. Pinky raised his brows and smiled a little after hearing Dixie's answer, while she just looked at him with some embarrassment, and then looked away.

"Then talk to him and reach an agreement so you two can pick things up again."

"What? But how?"

"That's it, just talk to him and express how you feel. If he expresses himself in the same way towards you and you both agree, go ahead, formalize your relationship again as a couple if that is what would make you both happier."

Dixie was silent for a few seconds, while thinking about many things and the idea of being able to solve the situation.

"But how do I do it?" Dixie asked with a shrug. "What if he isn't thinking like me about this?"

"You'll never know if you don't try. Talk to him and consider picking things up again," the teacher replied with a shrug as well.

"But I don't think I could do that," Dixie replied with a look of strangeness. "Wouldn't he be?"

"Miss Dixie," the teacher interrupted, raising his brows. "If by any chance you're thinking that Mr. Diddy should speak first in that conversation, even though you know that he feels the same way about you... doesn't it sound like you've been through something like this before?" he added with a few light laughs.

Dixie was silent and as if she did not know what to answer to that, at the same time she looked away with a forced smile.

"Just talk to him," Mr. Pinky said, smiling calmly. "And look, if you both get to fix it now... come back here later; I'll talk to you two, what do you say? If you both want, of course, and if you fix it. Or else, you can take as long as you want."

Mr. Pinky finished with a smile, and then continued to finish his lunch. Meanwhile, Dixie looked into nothingness again, while thinking about a lot of things.

"Here it is," Diddy was heard exclaiming on the stairs, before he appeared again on the terrace.

Diddy arrived with a tray that brought a small banana cake, along with three large colored plates. Then, he placed them on the table while looking somewhat tired, but smiling.

"Did it get too complicated, Mr. Diddy?" Mr. Pinky asked him.

"I couldn't find those toppings we were going to put on it," Diddy replied. "But I did bring them, and so did the trays."

"Well, now we'll have the banana dessert," the teacher added, smiling.

The three of them proceeded to take a piece of the dessert they were going to eat; Diddy and Dixie especially were excited about it as it was their favorite part of the special meals with Mr. Pinky. Between moments, Dixie became pensive again, but she tried to hide it at Diddy's presence, and because she did not want to lose focus from that last meal either.

During the afternoon hours, Diddy and Dixie were cleaning their room; the last cleaning too. They were a few hours away from embarking on their trip to DK Island. Between moments, both of them had a certain feeling of missing that space after they left, but even so, they still had the excitement that their stay on that island was about to end, as they had hoped so much.

"Are we not leaving anything behind, right?" Diddy asked, looking around the room.

"It's all like new," Dixie replied, gesturing affirmingly. "Now, let's rest."

Both left the room and stopped to sit on the floor of the outside porch to take a break, while smiling at having finished the task.

"Ah, it's almost time," Diddy said, smiling and leaning back against the wall. "In a few hours we'll have to set sail on the ship, Dix."

"If there's no longer a storm coming our way," Dixie said jokingly.

"There won't be anymore, or at least the hurricane is supposed to be over."

Then, the two of them kept silent as they took in the views they had from there, and then looked at each other smiling between the two.

Suddenly... Dixie thought of something she had had recently, and it was about *Diddy*. She didn't know if it would be the best timing, but she knew that she had to do something about it sooner or later regarding the terms she had with him. Waiting any longer was to be in vain; she had understood that what Mr. Pinky had told her was true: those loving moments with Diddy could be repeated; and she knew it, considering first of all that soon they would spend alone on that ship for more than a whole day. She just took temporary strength to speak and swallow all shame.

"Uh, hey, Diddy," she said, trying to talk seriously.

"Yeah?"

Dixie began to tremble a little when she had to answer, but she tried not to show it so much.

"It's that... I-I need to talk to you," she added without looking at him yet. "D-do you think you can?"

"Uhh, yeah? About what?" Diddy asked, looking at her a little strangely.

"Well... it's that..." Dixie was just getting nervous, but at the same time, she didn't want to let herself be dominated by that nervousness. "Diddy... I want us to restore our relationship," she said as quickly as she could.

Dixie was immediately quiet and didn't look at Diddy... while he got an expression of seriousness, at the same time he felt a small acceleration in his heartbeat at Dixie's unexpected words. Then, Dixie gave him a quick glance, but then looked away again.

"I mean... if you want too," Dixie told him, fighting her nerves and without looking at him. "I mean, obviously no if you don't want to, but... t-that is... That's what I wanted to tell you," she added with a forced smile and looking back at him shyly.

Diddy continued to look at her seriously and not knowing what to answer at first. Then, Dixie turned around again while she was regretting a little for saying that, and even wished she had turned back time a few minutes earlier so she hadn't said it. But then, she just calmed her nerves once and for all and sighed before continuing.

"Okay, Diddy... seriously though," she said without looking at him and more calmly, "I don't think I can go on like this, I... still have strong feelings for you... I'm sorry. And I just wanted to know if you... would also like us to talk about it and... if you want, you know... maybe we can pick up where we left off. Because if not... I don't think we can go on like this, if we both still love each other deep down. If not, maybe... we shouldn't even see each other for a while when we get back to DK Island."

Diddy remained pensively for a few seconds before looking away with quite a few doubts, while also remembering various things along with Dixie. Deep down, he knew the feelings he still had for her, but he kept thinking about how things would be if they gave themselves another chance. But suddenly, he thought that he should not miss that moment that was presenting to him, and decided to swallow any indecision he had. Then, he looked back at Dixie and placed a hand on her shoulder, causing her to turn to look at him. He didn't say anything to her at first, but smiled a little, before subtly holding her hand.

"Uhh, do you want us... to go somewhere else and... talk about it?" Diddy told her before smiling more confidently.

Dixie felt an acceleration in her heartbeat immediately, and looked at him with a smile as well, before nodding her head later.

They both got up and headed down the stairs. Having left the house completely, they continued walking to some other area where they could have a conversation with greater privacy. Neither of them wanted to say a word along the way, as it was obvious that they did not want to rush into saying what they needed to talk about just yet. They even tried not to keep looking at each other for so long.

They reached an area in the middle of tall vegetation and with enough space to be able to sit on the grass without interruptions, and so they did. Both of them were feeling somewhat nervous, and they still didn't want to look at each other at first. Until later, Dixie took a deep breath to gather the courage to talk about it.

"Diddy, I... Well, *that*," she said, looking at him quickly, and then looking away again. "I... really want to fix things with you."

Diddy kept looking at her with a little amusement at first for her reaction, but afterwards, he did not know what to tell her to begin with. Then, he also took a breath and had to abandon all nervousness, as he needed to express it well.

"Oh, well, Dixie," Diddy said before settling and looking her in the eye. "Honestly... I still have strong feelings for you too. I still want to be close to you and share happy moments together. And I know, I'm afraid that..."

"That something can happen to us again that hurts us," Dixie continued, looking at him again, but still trying to control her nerves. "I know... I fear that too. I don't want us to have any conflict between the two of us again too, much less something happening because of us."

"Uh, yes, but wait, Dixie," Diddy said, speaking to her more calmly this time and even smiling a little. "It's also true what you said... We won't be able to keep this up; I don't know what we're thinking by saying we can still be friends when... it's pretty obvious that we see each other as more than that. In fact, that another thing is also true: if we really didn't want to get back together ever again, we'd have to distance ourselves... until we truly feel nothing anymore."

"I know," Dixie said, smiling a little and looking at him somewhat shyly. "But... actually, I wouldn't want to distance myself from you. I can't find reasons to do so. In fact... if there were no consequences, I'd choose to be with you again, Diddy," she added, this time looking into his eyes more confidently. Then, she also settled to be in front of him.

Diddy couldn't help but smile a little more, and even blush. Then, he took Dixie's hands and looked at her with the same expression.

"Me too," he said, holding her hands, and then caressed her cheek. "If I had to choose among those three options too... I'd choose the third one, Dix; I'd choose to be with you again... It's the option that would make me happiest. And I know, in the end, it's also true... there's no correct answer; that can only be known by living it."

Dixie smiled more and was going to get closer to him, when suddenly, she gave him a look of strangeness after hearing those words... which had become known to her since recently.

"Wait a minute, how..." Dixie asked, looking at him strangely. "Where did you get that?"

"Yeah, yeah, from Mr. Pinky," Diddy replied with a few small laughs. "It's what he said, about the three options we had and that there's really nothing that guarantees perfection."

"How did you hear the conversation?" Dixie asked again, a little embarrassed and staring at him.

"It was unintentional; when I was going up the stairs, it was heard, and well, I heard that you named me and I couldn't help it but kept listening," Diddy replied with a shrugging and a forced smile. "It didn't actually take me long to look for those toppings and trays; I held them in my hands while I stood on the stairs for a while listening to everything."

"Ugh, Diddy," Dixie exclaimed, giving him a light push.

"Hey, it's okay, it's okay," Diddy replied, still laughing a little, before becoming calmer again. "But yeah... It's actually true... that there's nothing that will guarantee anything... Even Donkey told me something like that a long time ago."

"Really?" Dixie said, becoming more confused.

"Yeah, and I actually think so too. Just look at what we've been through; we were never prepared and everything never went as we expected," Diddy added, before smiling again at Dixie and holding her hands. "And by the way, don't worry, our friends from the shelter also went to talk to me like Mr. Pinky talked to you and... they told me something similar to what Mr. Pinky said; that... if we could start over, we would just have to do it right, learning from what we've been through."

Dixie remained pensive for a few seconds, before looking back at Diddy and smiling at him as she held his hands more.

"So... we can do it," Dixie said as she smiled at him tenderly again. "What do you say?"

"It's what I want most right now," Diddy replied in kind. "And you know? Another thing they told me... is that this world has too many awful things... and it really does. And so, if there's an opportunity to be happy, one can take it, so... I really want being able to be with you to be one of those opportunities... in which we can be happy together."

Dixie just smiled a lot more, as they both looked into each other's eyes for a while. Then, she caressed his face before speaking to him.

"So do I, Diddy," she said, getting a little closer. "I... really love you and... I'd really love for us to give ourselves another chance; deep down, it's what I want most also right now; I still want to be so close to you."

Suddenly, as he looked at Dixie's face, Diddy began to get closer to her, until his face was less than a couple of inches away from hers. But suddenly, Dixie moved away a little and stopped him.

"Uh, wait... Have we already formalized it or haven't we yet?" Dixie said with a playful look.

"But we just said we love each other and everything," Diddy replied with a few small laughs and shrugs, but then returned the same look. "Okay, okay, here goes: Uhh... Dixie, would you like to... we would try again?" he said, taking her hand in a certain elegant way and smiling with his teeth, despite knowing that being romantic was not his thing. "Is this how it's said, or not?"

Suddenly, Diddy was paralyzed and with a face a color similar to his clothes the moment he felt Dixie's lips on his; it had been a quick little kiss, in which she then looked at him smiling.

"Take it as a yes," Dixie said, smiling playfully.

Then, Diddy came to his senses again and looked at her in the same way. Suddenly, he approached her again, and took her face to join his lips again with hers and both immerse in a sweet kiss, this time being more synchronized on the part of the two. During the moment, both of them felt several strong beats in their hearts, although this time they enjoyed it much more for the fact that they no longer had any worries about having done so. Both parted, opening their eyes, before smiling at each other.

"I missed these moments with you," Diddy said, looking into her eyes closely and caressing her cheek.

"But we kissed last night anyway," Dixie replied with a little laugh.

"Yes, but now it's formal to be able to do it again," he replied, smiling more.

Dixie returned the same expression, before they both kissed again, with all the affection they had saved and no longer worrying about anything. Later, they parted while still smiling at each other afterwards. Then, they both looked at and caressed each other's faces, before Dixie rushed to hug Diddy with all the excitement she could feel at the moment, and he reciprocated in kind. The two continued to look at each other closely as they parted a little from the embrace, but at the same time, not wanting to let go completely.

"I love you, Diddy," she said, smiling tenderly.

"And I love you too, Dix," he replied in kind. "And I hope we do everything better."

Both felt a huge and nice emotion to be close, that they wished to stay like that for a long time, as if nothing else mattered at that moment. The fact that they had completely made peace in their relationship, was something that deep down they wished for. Then, they stayed together another while longer in that place, enjoying each other's company and closeness, even more than when they had started.

Chapter 97: Complexity

It was mid-afternoon, when Diddy and Dixie were already close to leaving for DK Island. The two were increasingly excited to finally be able to return home and reunite with their friends and family.

At that time, Diddy and Dixie were outside Mr. Pinky's house. Both were playing and swinging on the vines nearby and on the tree in the house, at different levels. Between their games, the two chased and pushed each other or pulled each other's limbs, but always with laughs of fun. On certain moments, both used to get somewhat affectionate and hugged or kissed each other on the cheek, obviously trying to make sure that Mr. Pinky did not see them that way.

"No, no, I won!" Dixie exclaimed, reaching the edge of the stairs of the house.

"That's because you used your hair!" Diddy replied mockingly. "You're cheating!"

"Me? I saw you taking running shortcuts, so don't act crazy!" Dixie replied in the same tone, before lunging down to tickle him.

"Hey, no, leave me!" Diddy exclaimed, laughing and trying to wrestle with her until he managed to tickle her too.

They both began to play and try to tickle each other. Later, the two continued to laugh when they had stopped their game and, upon finishing it completely, Diddy hugged Dixie excitedly and gave her a couple of kisses on the face, before she returned them with the same emotion.

"Kids, aren't you leaving anything behind- Huh?! But what is..."

Diddy and Dixie, being both embraced and with their faces almost stucked, were paralyzed and with their eyes open to the fullest when they heard a different voice behind them. When they turned around, they saw Mr. Pinky staring at them in astonishment and with a face of absolute confusion. Both of them let go little by little as they looked with a forced smile towards the teacher.

"Ahh, Mr. Pinky, uhh..." stuttered Diddy, keeping his smile forced along with Dixie. "W-what were you going to ask us?"

Mr. Pinky continued to look at them with confusion, but then only gave a few small laughs, which he tried to hide.

"I was going to ask if you haven't left anything in your room or here in the house," Mr. Pinky replied, trying to stay serious.

"No, of course not," Dixie replied, trying to sound normal. "We have almost no things to take with us."

"Okay, then it's all right," Mr. Pinky said, before smiling at them with a suspicious look. "*And so right*, as I see you two."

Diddy and Dixie looked at each other with some embarrassment in front of Mr. Pinky, but within a few seconds, they both made slight gestures pointing at the teacher with their eyes. Then, they shrugged with a calmer smile.

"Uh, Mr. Pinky," Dixie called him again as she looked and smiled at Diddy. "It's that... the two of us have fixed things and... well, we got back."

Mr. Pinky raised his brows at them again and gave them a little laugh.

"I had already noticed it," he said, shrugging and smiling, "I've seen you closer together than usual for a few hours; I even saw you a little worried in the morning... So, you decided to get back as a couple, didn't you?"

"Yes, yes, that's right," Diddy replied, laughing as he continued to look at Dixie. "In the end, we chose your third choice, mister... Yeah, yeah, Dixie and I talked about it, about what you said."

"Really?" he exclaimed, his hands at his sides. "Oh, well... But is everything okay? Are you no longer having doubts about... conflicts that may happen to you two being together, as you said?"

"Well... we think so," Diddy replied with a short smile and scratching his head. "But we could say yes; it's all okay."

"The truth is that... we do fear a little, but we'll see what happens later," Dixie added with a forced smile as well.

"Hmm, 'we'll see later' you say," Mr. Pinky said, crossing his arms and raising his brows.

Diddy and Dixie were adopting some dubious gestures at those questions from Mr. Pinky, that although they no longer wanted to give importance to those fears, they did worry a little about the future of both and their bond.

"Uhh, well, mister," Diddy said, becoming more serious and looking down at the ground. "Actually, we do fear a little of what may happen to us, but... regarding what you told Dixie, the choice of having fixed things was what really made us feel good, and... yes, you were right."

"And you really were right," Dixie added in the same way. "There aren't right answers in this matter, just... choosing what would make us happier and if it does us good. Or what do you say? Since we're both here... didn't you have something to tell us? What did you want to tell us?"

Mr. Pinky continued to look at them, before smiling serenely and emitting a sigh.

"It's that, guys, you see... you are still kids," Mr. Pinky told them with a calm smile. "I mean, you're too young for this thing called love... No, don't worry, don't get me wrong, I'm not saying it's wrong for you to love each other like that; that's up to you two. I just... think you might need to know some things about love and how to sustain it."

Diddy and Dixie looked at each other somewhat confused at Mr. Pinky's answer, which he could notice.

"Uhh, would you mind if I talk to you a little bit about this?" Mr. Pinky told them. "If you want, of course. Before you leave for DK Island."

"Uhh, okay?" Diddy replied with a forced smile and shrugging as he continued to be confused along with Dixie.

"Well, then sit down for a while."

Mr. Pinky pointed to the steps of the house, to which Diddy and Dixie went to sit down. Both were still somewhat confused, but at the same time, they were somewhat curious to know what Mr. Pinky would say to them, since it was not the first time they talked to him asking for some advice.

"How I was saying, guys," Mr. Pinky said, getting ready to talk to them, "you're just kids, and at that age... Well, it's not common to sustain a love well... Sorry to tell you, but most of the time it's like that"

"What are you saying?" Dixie exclaimed, looking at him strangely instantly. "How couldn't it-"

"But no, no, don't be alarmed, it's just for you to keep in mind, because as I told Miss Dixie... *there are no right answers in love*, just like the vast majority of things in life; there may be answers that are pretty close to ideal love, but they're never completely guaranteed to work."

Diddy and Dixie still looked at each other with confused faces as Mr. Pinky talked to them.

"And then... how's that?" Diddy asked with a look of strangeness, as did Dixie.

"You fear that something will happen to you again that may separate you both and be painful for you, right?" Mr. Pinky asked them, to which Diddy and Dixie nodded in a dubious way. "Well, I don't want to keep scaring you, but... those things can happen to you two again, some often, some less."

"Why do you say that?" Dixie asked the same way. "Do you mean it?"

"Yeah, of course," the teacher replied, shrugging and raising his brows. "For example, having disagreements, feeling insecure, misunderstandings, facing challenging situations, third ones trying to intervene between you, or individuals who don't want to see you two happy, are things you'll likely encounter again. The key is... *how you two handle them*. Actually... love is quite complex; it's not something to be taken lightly or to think that just feeling love is enough. And not everything is happy moments in love; sometimes there will also be difficult times, to a greater or lesser extent. Even a happy ending as such *doesn't* exist... Yeah, believe it or not. So, don't think that this is the end of your story, it's just the beginning; what really matters is simply as long as you both stay well and live it."

Both Diddy and Dixie deepened their looks of strangeness at what Mr. Pinky was telling them, as if that wasn't what they expected to hear.

"Oh, is it really very... *complex*?" Diddy said with a forced smile and scratching his head. "Are you serious about what you say?"

"Yeah, and the truth is that there are some harsh truths about loving that way. First of all... there's one thing you should know and that you'll surely not like, but... there's a high probability that they won't love each other like this forever; it can change over time, I mean, you won't feel as deeply in love with the same *intensity* throughout your entire lives... Yes, it must sound terrible to you, but that happens quite frequently."

"What?!" Dixie exclaimed, looking at him extremely seriously. "Hey, that mustn't be true."

"Yeah, it is, and it's real," Mr. Pinky repeated, shrugging his shoulders and shaking his head from side to side. "Why do you think many couples break up over time? Because they no longer feel the

same motivation to keep fighting for their love; they start to be carried away by losing interest and that even leads them to make irreversible mistakes.”

"But what are you saying?" Diddy exclaimed, even more surprised. "I mean... Dixie and I did feel that we could love each other for a long time, otherwise we wouldn't be together."

"Exactly, you two say that because you're still in your loving phase, but there will come a time where things could change... But no, don't worry, that doesn't mean you should give up either," he added, smiling again. "It's about both doing your part to build and take care of your bond. Though, if you manage to feel deeply in love for your whole lives, then welcome; but just one thing... that's only achieved by doing things right and putting effort into keeping your bond strong."

"And then... how can one manage *to keep a strong bond*?" Dixie asked, still with a confused face. "Hey, you speak with too much depth."

"Well, I'll try to help you, *although I've been repeating*: there's *no guaranteed perfect formula*, but it can get as close as possible to that," the teacher added, smiling more calmly. "First of all, the key to any love is knowing how to communicate and listen to each other; never just dropping hints or waiting for the other to guess or interpret what you're feeling; *that's not*. For example... what Miss Dixie did to try to get Mr. Diddy confessed his feelings to her, *no*; from that beginning it started badly, with those 'signs' and childish games of trying to make the other one guess what one wanted; in the long term, that will bring terrible consequences."

"I see..." Dixie replied, showing a little embarrassment and a slight smile.

"But well, it's already happened and you can't change it, obviously. But it's there for you to take it as a lesson. That idea of waiting or trying to make the other guess what you want, *discard it*, or your love won't get anywhere. That's why, whenever you need to tell each other something important, no matter how uncomfortable or embarrassing it may seem, *talk about it, talk about it between the two of you*, and also know how to listen; you'll save yourselves a lot, believe me."

"So, that can be managed just with that?" Diddy asked.

"That's the main thing," Mr. Pinky replied, smiling. "Although it's not the only thing; there are other things too. For example, another thing you should consider is having a lot of *trust in each other*, I mean, learning to deal with any insecurity one might have about the other, about having doubts about whether you really love each other and if you would never be disloyal... Yeah, that is indeed very complex, because here comes another harsh reality: neither of you *will ever* know for certain if the other is truly in love with you."

Diddy and Dixie looked at him again with quite confusion immediately.

"Yeah, yeah, that must sound confusing to you, but it's another reality if you think about it deeply," the teacher continued. "You see, you two can tell each other that you love each other and everything, but... you'll never, ever know if the other is telling you the truth, I mean, Mr. Diddy will never know if Miss Dixie is telling the truth to him, and likewise, Miss Dixie will never know the same about Mr. Diddy. The answer is simple: *you're not inside each other's minds*; no matter how many affirmative words are said, you'll never know for sure if it's true. And that's why it's pointless to have doubts about the other; you'd only have... to trust."

"But..." Dixie pronounced, looking at Diddy in confusion.

"And speaking of having trust, there's something else that's also pointless for you to worry about... and it's the third parties, yes, third individuals who try to intervene in your relationship. There will always be third parties, believe me, yes, and it's something inevitable, unfortunately. I mean... there will always be other boys who want to go after Miss Dixie, and likewise, other girls who want to go after Mr. Diddy."

"Oh... really?" Diddy asked with a look of some disgust, as did Dixie.

"Yeah, and that happens quite a bit, unfortunately. What happened to you won't be the only time," the teacher replied with a shrug. "There will be everything: some third parties will be discreet and go unnoticed; others will try to approach one of you, but they'll back off if you set boundaries; others will try to be clever and manipulate you to have a chance with one of you; others more intense who will try more than once to come between you; and others much more intense and envious who won't stand seeing you together and may even do some evil to you two... as was Mr. Jemky, for example."

"Oh, no, don't say that," Dixie replied with the same tone of disgust.

"But don't be afraid; it all depends *on each of you* setting boundaries with any third party that tries to interfere in your bond. Pay attention! I'm talking about each of you individually setting boundaries with the third party; it's never about setting boundaries between you two regarding the third party. If any third party appear to you again, try not to make a big deal out of it; just stay calm, talk it over between the two of you if necessary, don't let things be misinterpreted, and even help and protect each other in extreme cases, in case a dangerous third one appears like Mr. Jemky or Miss 'Jenny', that I already know she wasn't real, but it could happen anyways. And therefore, it's important for you to learn to trust and not easily fall for any misinterpretation or trap someone might set for you."

"It all sounds very... complex indeed," Dixie said, looking strangely at Diddy.

"And it is; there's even another important point on that topic that surely you won't like at all," the teacher added, pausing before continuing. "You see, you two may feel right now that you love each other and everything, that you only have eyes for each other and that you would never be interested in anyone else, but you have to know a harsh truth... no matter how in love you are and how much you promise each other, at some point someone else might catch your attention."

"What?!" Diddy exclaimed, immediately adopting a look of extreme strangeness.

"Hey, but what are you saying?" Dixie replied in the same way. "That must be really false."

"No, no, really, it can happen to you. I mean, maybe not now, and as I said: right now you might feel like you love each other intensely and all, but... in the long run it could happen, and you might feel attracted to someone else. But, hey, don't worry! Don't be alarmed. You see... something that will unfortunately happen to you is that your intensity of love will cool down, yeah... it's unfortunate. But don't fear, that also doesn't mean you don't love each other anymore, of course there will still be love; it's just that you won't feel as excited in the same way, and that's where doubts about whether to keep fighting could arise, or interest in other third parties could also appear. As I said at the beginning, that's what this is all about: fighting together in difficult times and against the adversities of time, and one of those adversities of time is that some third individual might catch your attention. But just one thing! It depends *on each of you* not letting that interfere in your bond."

"But how is that going to be possible?" Diddy asked, still surprised at what Mr. Pinky was telling them. "I mean, I could never change Dix-"

"No, no, don't say that either," the teacher hastened to reply. "Never say you would 'never' do anything wrong in your bond; try as little as possible to say it, because life takes many turns and things can change over time... Yeah, guys, I'm sorry to tell you that, but it's true. If I remember correctly, some time ago, you told me that your 'friends', Miss 'Jenny and company', told you things like that, about one day you were going to like more individuals; well... they were actually somewhat right; they told you in mean ways, but... actually, it's true."

"Is it serious?" Dixie exclaimed, not knowing what to think now.

"What?" Diddy replied in the same way. "Oh, but then what?"

"It's like I told you: it's already the responsibility of *each one* to respect the other and not take things to another level in case a third party appears. Pay attention there too! It doesn't mean that between the two of you, you have to be jealous that you might like a third one; no! Be very careful not to fall into that; none of you belong to the other, always keep that in mind. It depends on *each one individually* not to allow a third party in. And that's why too... worrying about the idea of a third one is pointless; it's advisable that you learn to build trust and to generate it as well, and that way you'll save yourselves a lot of unnecessary drama that will only harm you."

Diddy and Dixie just kept looking at each other with confused faces, even if deep down... Mr. Pinky's words were making some sense after remembering their situations they had gone through.

"What's more, I'll give you some advice, kids," the teacher continued. "If someone else catches your attention, communicate it between the two of you... Yeah, it's not a bad idea, believe it or not, you can talk about it, whether to work it out or in other cases... decide if you'll continue together, because that's also a possibility, unfortunately. And also, know how to listen to each other in such a case, no matter how uncomfortable it may be. And no, don't feel bad if you two come to feel upset or have disagreements because of that; it's not wrong to feel jealous in such a situation, it's a natural reaction; what you should keep in mind is *how* you handle those jealousy and how well you can control them; that's also another important point."

"And another thing I want to highlight here is what Mr. Jemky did to you two. Look, don't feel guilty for having misunderstood and even broken up, because that's another important point: you should never, ever allow disloyalty between the two of you; that will immediately end your love bond, and it's not wrong to defend your position in a case when you have that certainty. But of course, there actually was no disloyalty on the part of either of you there, so here goes that other important point: that of building trust, so that in case someone does something like that again to you two, you don't care and even laugh about it."

"Geez... it sounds more and more complicated," Dixie said, looking at Diddy in confusion. "So, in summary everything is... each of us putting in our part and communicating well?"

"Exactly," the teacher replied, nodding his head. "And that's also what love between two ones is about: each one doing their part; it's more about worrying and taking care of what one does oneself, rather than worrying about what the other does, because as I said before: you'll never know what the other really feels or thinks, no matter what you say. And here comes another point: you'll *never* finish getting to know each other, not even yourselves."

Diddy and Dixie looked at each other again, although this time, with some astonishment at those Mr. Pinky's last words, as if they began to make more sense.

"And another thing, kids, since we mentioned what Mr. Jemky did to you. You see, here's yet another point: not only third individuals will want to intervene between the two of you, but also other individuals in general. I mean, do you remember what Miss 'Jenny and company' did to you two? I know that they were actually Mr. Jemky and company, but indeed, you may often encounter *that* type of individuals: envious, gossipy, resentful, or malicious individuals who don't want to see you happy, who may even pretend to be your friends and speak ill of you behind your backs."

"Oh, no, that was really a headache at the time," Dixie said in disgust.

"And it is, and the worst part is that even... individuals close to you could be one of them. Just as there will be those who rejoice for you and support you, there will also be those who detest seeing you together and may even try to separate you in some way. There will even be those who make 'subtle' comments with the aim of motivating you to separate or telling you that your love is not worth it; you'll encounter those types of individuals in any quantity."

"Oh, no," Diddy said. "That would really be unbearable; with what they did to us we had enough."

"But don't worry. Here you must follow the same step: ignore those types of individuals with their comments and actions that won't contribute anything to you. And obviously, take action in cases where they cross the line."

"Wow, it's really all so complex," Dixie commented with a shrug. "You've told us that it's not enough to just love each other, that there will always be third parties and envious individuals, that we won't always feel in love, even that we might be attracted to third parties?" she said while counting on her fingers, before bringing her hands to her temples. "Ohh, why is everything so complex?"

"Yes, but don't worry, don't get discouraged," the teacher replied, smiling and calming them down. "As you can see, sustaining a love is quite complex and entails a great *responsibility*, because it is that: it's something that you have to *build*, something in which each one puts in their part and does everything *possible* to make it work, and in which it's not enough just to feel that you love each other; it's also about knowing how to take care of it and protect it from various adversities... But all that complexity shouldn't be a demotivation to keep going; if you feel that you love each other, *love each other*, everything you both want. There's nothing wrong with loving each other, you just have to be responsible, *very responsible* above all."

"Just be... responsables" Diddy repeated pensively.

"That's right; knowing how to handle it well," the teacher added. "It's about building it together, while still being yourselves. Because here comes another very important point... Never, never abandon yourselves. I mean, you can love each other as much as you want, but *never* forget yourselves in case the relationship doesn't go well or comes to an end, or even in regards to your individual dreams... For example, you, Mr. Diddy, what would you most like to be in the future when you grow up, other than being heroes?"

"Me? Well... I don't know yet," Diddy replied, scratching his head, before smiling a little. "But maybe a racing driver."

"And you, Miss Dixie?" the teacher asked again.

"Uhh, well..." Dixie replied pensively. "I've always liked the idea of being a great guitarist."

"Alright, both of you have some aspirations," the teacher continued. "And as I just mentioned, *never* abandon them or any future plans you have because of your relationship. In fact, you should support and accompany each other in any event of your lives without your bond being an obstacle, not necessarily going together in everything and all the time, but in being supportive and rejoicing in each other's happiness."

"That doesn't sound so confusing now," Diddy commented, smiling.

"And likewise, being there for each other in low moments; loyalty is also that: being there for each other even in bad times, and helping each other as possible as you could. But be careful there too! By helping each other as *possible* as you could, I mean just that: to the *extent possible*; another thing you should know is that no matter how bad the situation one of you may be facing, *you won't be the complete solution for the other*, that's also a matter of *each of you individually*; even if one's problems may involve the other to a lesser or greater extent. Obviously, you can be united and support each other as much as possible, but you *never* would be the solution, although... as I said: there are no right answers in this and maybe you would, but in most cases it's not like that; you should also keep that in mind and so you'll save yourselves both from more conflicts that could harm you."

"Wow... it really is a lot to take in," Dixie said with a forced smile. "Maybe all of this is what you mean by it's not enough to just feel that we love each other."

"Exactly, it's not something to be taken lightly; it also entails both of you making a commitment to sustain and take care of your love," the teacher added with a few small laughs, before getting serious again. "But don't worry, as I told you, all that complexity shouldn't be a barrier to loving each other; in fact... the love between two ones should serve as motivation to fight all that complexity; if you truly love each other, after a while, taking care of your love may not even seem so complex, because it's not just about feeling it, but also choosing it; the feeling is what you feel now, but over time you might run into any obstacle where you must *decide* whether to continue staying together."

"It all sounds... more complex than I thought," Diddy said in the same pensive and smiling way. "I mean, sometimes Donkey told me something similar: that not everything in love is going to be as we expect, but... I didn't think it really had several details."

"And it really has them," the teacher added, nodding. "So, guys, don't be afraid either... If you're going to choose to love each other, do it, but you must do it properly without taking it lightly or taking things for granted, because otherwise... you better stay single. And if you manage to go far, rejoice, because anyway, it's also something wonderful: having come a long way with someone and still keeping the love strong. And also, if you're going to choose to love each other, do it and show it to each other, because likewise... you'll never know which day one of you won't be in this world anymore."

"Oh..." Dixie said, looking at Diddy in a serious way.

"Yeah... that's also something to consider: love also comes with the possibility of enduring pain for the other. No, I'm not talking about love ending or anything like that, but about something bad happening to one of you... like what almost happened to you after fighting those apes and those tamers."

Diddy and Dixie returned to their expressions of seriousness after hearing those words from Mr. Pinky.

"But no, don't worry, that shouldn't be an impediment either. Like I said before: a happy ending doesn't exist, what matters is the happiness you experience while you're living it, for as long as life allows you to. Because that's what it's all about: living love for as long as it lasts, as long as both of you want it. Don't be afraid to love each other, because it's also something beautiful, it's a real achievement to be able to build and sustain a loving bond with someone and share part of life. And that's it: two beings who love each other and also fight for that love, and protect it against any adversity that may arise."

"Against... any adversity," Dixie repeated to herself.

"That's right... But watch out for one thing there too!" Mr. Pinky added, suddenly raising his brows. "You see, there's something that is very true, and it's that love can indeed fight, it can fight against any obstacle or adversity that intervenes between you two, against any tough moment, and in some cases even against any of your problems; if both of you put in effort, it can overcome any adversity... But there are some adversities against which you should *never* fight in the name of your love, and it's when they come from *harmful behaviors on your part*. Never, *ever*, under *any* circumstances should you tolerate disrespect between you two, or any disloyalty, even disinterest; those things, *never*. Because if there's something like that, then the love will have ended... and it won't be the same again... But aside from that, you can overcome many things, if both of you want to, of course... And well, if your love were to end... you also have to be prepared for that, because it's something that could happen. And in that latter case, you'll have to move forward, because love should never hurt because of an adversity coming from you, never."

Mr. Pinky took a breath before smiling at them a little again. Diddy and Dixie continued to look at him, while looking at each other and then towards the ground, in a pensive way. There was almost a minute of silence, before Diddy and Dixie looked back at Mr. Pinky, but he seemed to have finished his words.

"And that's it, kids," the teacher said, raising his brows. "I think that's all I can tell you. As I told you, there's no perfect formula, as in everything, but there are several basic alternatives that would be ideal for you to follow if you choose to be together."

"Hey, but on second thought..." Diddy said pensively before smiling, "everything you've said... sounds quite logical; I think it makes sense."

"Well, actually, it's logical," Mr. Pinky added with a slight laugh. "It's all common sense, and in theory, love sounds pretty logical and easy. But believe me... there are many who don't grasp several of those basic facts, and it even becomes difficult for them once they experience them."

"You have... loved too, right, Mr. Pinky?" Dixie asked.

Suddenly, Mr. Pinky took on seriousness again, that even Dixie felt a little bad to have asked him something like that, after forgetting for a moment the answer he would say.

"Well, of course... to my wife," Mr. Pinky replied, giving a short smile, before lowering his gaze and sighing earnestly afterwards. "You could imagine what happened. But yeah... in fact, she has been my only love so far in my life. We lasted several years together... And yes, we had to fight against various adversities as I mentioned; we even considered breaking up completely because of how hard our lives were, especially mine... but we could not, and we chose to continue together."

And years later, we had two little offspring, they were my little children... Although, it was a serious mistake on our part," he added before sighing again and showing himself with some sadness. "We shouldn't have brought children into the world with all the adversities and terrible conditions that we both already had. But, well..."

"Uh, hey, Mr. Pinky," Dixie said with some insecurity. "Sorry if I went... reckless or something."

"Oh, no, don't worry, Miss Dixie," the teacher replied with a short, fleeting smile. "Anyway, you two already know what happened. It has taken me years to be able to speak it with some calm, and it's still difficult for me that I don't know how I was able to do it just now," he added before emitting another sigh. "But... that's how things happened. It gives me just a little comfort... that those scoundrel tamers will pay for the remaining time of their lives, for all their atrocious crimes. And you know what? You may not believe me, but... several times I have seen my wife in my dreams, and she always tells me... to keep living, even in the harsh adversities of this life... And you know what else she has told me?... That she'll be resting well with our babies the day those darn tamers pay once and for all... and that that day was going to come and... I see that it has been true, that it did come," he finished with a smile, this time more lasting.

"Wow... we didn't know that," Dixie said, looking at Diddy in astonishment.

"Did you really see that?" Diddy added in the same way.

"Yes, several times," the teacher replied. "And I think that... that will be quite comforting to me from now on... In the end, what she told me came true."

"You're very strong, mister," Diddy said, smiling back serenely. "You really are."

"And you're very smart," Dixie added in the same way.

"Hey, I just do what I can," the teacher replied with a slight smile in a kind way, before sighing. "But I must keep going... as I promised her."

There was another moment of silence between the three of them, while they looked at each other calmly. Diddy and Dixie, on the other hand, kept thinking about everything that Mr. Pinky had told them, and now more than ever, they could not stop thinking about everything he had to have gone through.

"Uh, well, kids," Mr. Pinky said after a while and looked up at the sunset sky. "I think I won't bother you anymore here. You're almost ready to leave, right?"

Diddy and Dixie looked up at the sky too, which was beginning to show a few pink tones, typical of the last phase of the afternoon.

"It seems that... yes," Diddy said, still looking at the sky.

"Well, if you want, you can start getting ready," the teacher said, "before it gets too late for your trip."

"That's right, I think we should start preparing," Dixie added, smiling.

Diddy nodded, and then both of them turned to start climbing the stairs. When suddenly, they stopped for a while to look at the house; it was as if they got that feeling that used to appear on the

last days of some stay.

"I guess... this will be the last time here," Dixie said with a short smile.

Then, they both continued upstairs until they reached their room. It took only a few minutes as they got ready to leave and collected some things that belonged to Mr. Pinky to leave at his house again.

Later, they both left the room for the last time, while giving it one last look. At the end, they came down from the house, knowing that it would be the last time they would be there.

"Alright... are you ready, kids?" Mr. Pinky asked, smiling at them.

"All set," Diddy and Dixie replied simultaneously and with the same expression.

"So, it's time to go."

Diddy and Dixie nodded with a smile and set off. Mr. Pinky was going to accompany them too. Despite being an extensive trip, they carried no baggage; Dixie barely carried the fractionated emerald under her beret, and Diddy the compass that Mr. Pinky had given them. On his part, Mr. Pinky carried a small wooden box, which Diddy and Dixie looked at with some curiosity.

"And what's that?" Diddy asked curiously.

"Ah, it's Mrs. Wrinkly's documents that I told you to take," the teacher replied. "You must take very good care of them."

The three kongs walked to the animal shelter, and then went to that ship that was anchored. Diddy and Dixie took one last look at Mr. Pinky's house, before moving away from the site entirely...

Chapter 98: The Final Farewell

The first minutes of sunset had arrived, and the pair of little kongs were on the beach near the animal shelter, where they had the ship ready to sail.

As expected, several animals from the island were there to accompany them in their last moments on the island. Among them, there were the animals that were from the circus, Mr. Pinky and the apes who owned the shelter, accompanying them in the front. The rescued kong children followed, who were also there to see Diddy and Dixie's farewell. And other animals that had been from the zoo or others that were new to that place, who were just curious about the farewell.

Diddy and Dixie were on board along with Mr. Pinky and some of their animal friends, who were helping them arrange some fruits and other items they might need as supplies for the long trip ahead.

Mr. Pinky was teaching them how to use the compass he had given them, while also giving them a map obtained from the post office, where the location of DK Island was.

"So... if I turn this direction..." Diddy said, holding the compass and the map, "and the needle points North and we're heading southwest, that means we are on the right track, doesn't it?"

"Exactly," Mr. Pinky replied. "You should be careful and stay alert in case there's a change in direction. However, don't worry too much; when the hurricanes end, the wind direction is usually favorable in that direction, but don't get too confident, of course. And if possible, take turns sleeping."

"Okay," Dixie replied, nodding. "I just hope there isn't another storm."

"And remember," the teacher added, pointing out, "if anything bad happens to the ship, run immediately to get the emergency boat, and if you can, take the compass and the map with you. Ah, and be careful with the box of documents that I gave you, you know, give it to Mrs. Wrinkly and Mr. Cranky."

"Okay, mister," Diddy replied with a nod.

"Hey, it looks like it's all set!" one of the animals exclaimed in the distance as they finished placing some boxes with fruits.

Diddy and Dixie gave the animals a nod as well, before they headed off the ship. Then, both with Mr. Pinky headed towards the boarding ramp of the ship.

"Well, kids..." Mr. Pinky said before going down, placing his hands on Diddy and Dixie's heads. "It seems that... everything has come to an end. It's your time."

"Oh... it's true," Dixie said, looking toward the teacher and the other animals in the distance.

"Well, so... we say goodbye here," the teacher said, smiling at them. "I think I won't see you again from now on."

Diddy and Dixie gave a look at Hurricane Island, which was within reach. Then, they looked at the entire herd of animals in the distance, before looking back at Mr. Pinky.

"Wow, I still don't believe this moment has come," Diddy said with a slight laugh, before speaking to the teacher. "Hey, Mr. Pinky... will you ever go to DK Island again?" he asked with a cheerful smile.

"Yeah, you'll return there, right?" Dixie asked in the same way.

"Maybe I will... Although for now, I don't have it planned," the teacher replied. "But who knows; maybe one day I'll take a stroll over there."

"And will you be our teacher again?" Dixie asked curiously.

"Well, I don't think that," he replied.

"Oh, you have to be, of course," Diddy added, shaking his arm.

"Hey, that's going to be unlikely," the teacher replied with a little laughter. "That time I was just a substitute teacher; besides, you know I also have a job at another school."

"But you have to be again someday," Dixie told him in the same way. "Say yes, even if it's just as a substitute again."

"Well, in that case, it might be, if Mrs. Wrinkly calls me again," he replied, still smiling. "And I will no longer be a grumpy ape," he added jokingly.

"And we won't fight over pyramids anymore," Diddy replied in kind, before the three of them finished laughing a little.

"Okay, guys," Mr. Pinky said in a calmer tone. "I leave you here. You know, if you can, send us a postcard to let us know that you arrived safely. I trust you anyway," he added, smiling at each of them.

"Okay, mister," Diddy replied, smiling back. "And by the way... thank you for everything, for letting us stay in your house all this time and for accompanying us."

"And for helping us too," Dixie added in the same way. "And everything you have done for us."

"Oh, it's nothing, kids," Mr. Pinky replied, placing his hands on the shoulders of the two. "It was also a pleasure to have you here and get to know you more... And I also thank you very much for saving me and the others; you're brave little ones."

Mr. Pinky continued to smile at them, while the two of them were also smiling. Then, Diddy and Dixie ended with a hug towards Mr. Pinky.

"Take good care of yourselves, children," he said after separating. "May you arrive safely on DK Island, and greet everyone there. You, Mr. Diddy, embrace Mr. Donkey when you see him; and you, Miss Dixie, your sister and cousins. Hug your loved ones tightly and stay united for as long as life grants. And you two too, you know... I hope you can go far," he concluded, smiling broadly.

Diddy and Dixie nodded with a big smile, before resuming their way. Then, Mr. Pinky began to get off the ship. Diddy and Dixie were going to stay, but decided to go down one last time to say

goodbye to the others as well. Upon arrival, some of the animals closest to the two, went to say goodbye.

"Oh... So, you're leaving now, aren't you?" one of the animals said, smiling sweetly.

"Yes... the time has come," Dixie replied with the same expression. "By the way, thanks also to you... for helping us when we arrived on this island and accompanying us during this time, and also to the shelter owner apes."

"Yeah, and for going to help us on our journey and for helping us fix the ship," Diddy added in the same way.

"Hey, it's nothing," another of the animals replied, smiling at them. "It's you both whom we want to thank; both of you have been like angels to us. If it weren't for you arriving at that circus... we wouldn't even be alive now."

"We'll be eternally grateful to you," another of the animals told them in the same tone. "Maybe we won't see you around here anymore, but we'll always remember you, even when we take our own paths."

"And we'll always wish you the best," another of the animals added. "Both of you... brought justice for all of us, for our friends and loved ones who are no longer in this world, for those four little chimpanzees, and for all those who suffered a terrible fate at the hands or under the orders of those monstrous tamers. No animal will suffer anymore because of those darn ones."

"You're little heroes. You've also helped many animals, and now we'll be able to rebuild our lives."

Diddy and Dixie just smiled back at the animals in a sweet way. Afterwards, some of the animals began to say goodbye to the two, with quick but sincere hugs.

A couple of minutes passed while several animals said goodbye to the two, even some who weren't so close to them said goodbye in the distance. Some of the rescued kong children also ran to say goodbye to the two, and even thanked them in the same way.

Later, almost everyone had said goodbye to both and, at the end, Diddy and Dixie headed back to the foot of the boarding ramp of the ship, but not before being bid farewell one last time by their animal friends and Mr. Pinky.

"Well, it's time to leave here," Dixie said, smiling at the others. "I hope things go well for you from now on, and that you can rebuild your lives peacefully."

"We'll remember you all too," Diddy added in the same way. "May everything go well for you in your days."

"Same to you, Diddy and Dixie," the animals replied similarly and consecutively.

"Take good care of yourselves, and take care of the children," Dixie told them before starting to climb the ramp.

"You too, take care of yourselves," the animals replied. "Goodbye, friends!"

"Goodbye, kids!" the teacher exclaimed.

"Goodbye!" Diddy and Dixie replied to everyone in general. "Until next time!"

Upon reaching the deck of the ship, Diddy and Dixie picked up the gangway and closed the entire railing. Afterwards, they went towards the wheels that lifted the anchors, for which Mr. Pinky and some of the animals helped them a little by pulling the rope, until later, the ship sailed...

Diddy and Dixie immediately headed for the helm, and made sure the ship was balanced and properly directed. They placed Mr. Pinky's compass next to the helm to corroborate that they were going in the right direction.

After that, they both leaned over the rail one last time to bid farewell to everyone from a distance. The entire herd gathered to give them final farewell gestures as the ship moved forward, even though the speed was low.

Although the ship accelerated slowly, that gave more time for Diddy and Dixie to say goodbye to everyone in the distance, until they gradually stopped doing so and just looked at them smiling. Suddenly, both of them were feeling a slight sense of pity in leaving that island, even if they were also excited to be already returning to DK Island. They began to reminisce about all the moments they had on Hurricane Island, especially the good ones. And, in particular, they felt they would miss the animals there, especially their friends from the circus and Mr. Pinky, even having a completely different image of the latter compared to when they first met him.

Minutes later, Diddy and Dixie stopped making more gestures to the herd, since everyone was being seen farther away increasingly and, in the same way, Hurricane Island was drifting away until it appeared as extensive as they had never seen it before. Then, they both headed back to the helm, where they continued to control the direction of the ship and navigate by the compass. They both looked out toward the horizon, before looking at each other with a wide smile.

"Now... homeward bound," Diddy said to Dixie, smiling at her.

Dixie smiled back at him, and after making a gesture of excitement, she hurriedly hugged and kissed Diddy on the cheek. Immediately, he hugged her too with the same emotion for a couple of seconds, before returning a kiss on her face. Afterwards, both remained in front of the helm and steering the ship, but not before giving a last look at Hurricane Island, which was already farther away, and the herd was barely visible as a silhouette of a crowd...

Chapter 99: Uncertain Future

It had been maybe an hour and a half, and the sky was already seen with colors of late afternoon and almost dusk. There was no longer so much dry land in sight, and Hurricane Island was barely seen as an unrecognizable distant point. The sea was beginning to look open with only horizons in sight on all sides. Diddy and Dixie were excited after starting their trip back to their island with complete peace... Although after several minutes of navigation, that emotion was disappearing naturally.

Both were sitting between the helm and the steps, both with expressions of seriousness and different from how they were at first.

"I'm bored already," Diddy said as his head rested on his hand.

"Me too," Dixie replied after heaving a sigh.

"How long will it take?" Diddy asked somewhat reluctantly. "Is this how we'll spend the whole trip?"

"No idea, but according to what we were told, we'll spend all night and most of tomorrow here... Ohh, what if we actually took much longer?"

"We should have had an engine put in this ship," Diddy added jokingly. Then, he got up to take a look at the compass and map, and then returned to sit next to Dixie. "At least we're doing well so far."

Afterwards, Diddy took the box that Mr. Pinky had given them to deliver it to Wrinkly when they arrived, and examined it for a while.

"What if we opened Mr. Pinky's box?" Diddy said with a tone of curiosity.

"Hey, no, he said that it should arrive sealed in Wrinkly's hands. In addition... that might be a lot of paper sheets with long and tiring texts to read."

"Oh, but at least it wouldn't be so boring to read now," Diddy added, shaking the box and trying to hear what was inside. Afterwards, he put the box aside and continued to look into nothingness. "In the end, this ship was left for us to return to DK Island," he said after a while. "First we thought we'd go with all those kids on this ship, then it was a means of kidnapping, then a means of escape, then a battlefield, and now... it's on where we're returning home."

"In the end, it was left for the use that was going to be given to it in the beginning, just without all those children," Dixie said, also looking towards the horizon. "I still don't believe we've come out of all this alive. And to think that at first, I was just going to search for you at that circus and then we'd head straight back to DK Island," she added with a small smile.

"Or rather, I was just going to go out for a sail in the sea and come back to my house that same night," Diddy said smiling too.

"And what else would have happened in that case?" she added with a curious look. "Would you never have talked to me because of that pyramid anymore?"

"Well, maybe not," Diddy replied with a little laughter and some embarrassment. "But maybe if you clarified everything for me, we could have fixed it and I could have understood it."

"Because rather... Oh, you already know, I used to just try in absurd ways that you told me you liked me," Dixie added more embarrassedly.

"Ah, in that regard, those four of them had planned to steal that emerald from us anyway," Diddy replied, shrugging and smiling a little. "But how would we have handled the Jemky and the others issue? I don't think we could have told anyone about the misdeeds they used to do back then."

"That's true. Can you imagine what would have happened in those circumstances?"

"Well, we weren't really in that much danger from them; in the end, they were going to be with their dads on that island in that hidden building. The problem would be... *what would have happened there*. I'm not going to justify anything, but... if none of this had happened, those apes would have mechanized all those children without interruptions; the tamers would have continued carrying out their evil plans, even all that macabre circus would still be there, with those animals suffering or dying; or even Jemky and the other three kids would have returned for this next school year, and who knows what trouble they would have made for us... We might even have had contact with that group of apes; we never saw them before, but who knows if at some point we were going to run into them."

"Oh, no. Believe me, having contact with those criminal apes was death... and on DK Island it would have been a tragedy. I still don't believe that we had them so close, I mean... their own adopted children."

"I guess... all we have left is to see everything from that perspective on how things happened," Diddy said before sighing. "Maybe what Mr. Pinky told us, also applies to everything: there are no correct answers or perfect formulas."

Both remained silent, looking towards the horizon or towards the deck of the ship. Minutes later, Dixie leaned her head on Diddy's shoulder, and he caressed her face before looking at her. She looked up at his eyes sweetly, and then caressed his cheeks as well while smiling at him. Then, both put their lips together and shared a sweet kiss. The two continued to smile and look at each other closely after finishing it.

"Hey, Diddy," she said as they kept together. "Have you thought that... maybe in these areas it was our first kiss?"

"Well, depending on which way the hurricane was going, we might know," Diddy replied jokingly.

"And by the way, what would you have done at that moment if that storm had not intervened?" Dixie asked with a little laugh.

"Oh, I don't know," Diddy replied with a little laugh too and blushing a little. "I don't even know how it happened. What would you have done?"

"I actually don't know either," Dixie added in the same way, "I just wanted to run away, I mean, maybe I'd have kissed you again, but the shyness was stronger back then... although I wasn't going to throw myself into the sea either."

"The sea threw us anyway," he said, laughing a little, before calming down. "No, wait, I shouldn't laugh about it... And well, what were we up to?" he added, smiling back playfully.

Dixie smiled back at him, and then gave him a quick kiss on the lips. Both of them continued to smile and embraced each other for a while.

"Hey, what if we look out at the sea or something?" Diddy told Dixie later.

"Why not?"

The two got up and checked the compass once again. Then, they started walking on the deck of the ship from end to end, while watching everywhere... even though there was nothing but water and sky in sight. Minutes later, they stopped to peer over the railing, not so far from the steps that headed to the helm.

"Oh, well, there's nothing to see," Diddy said as he leaned out with Dixie and looked out over the horizon.

"We can't even see Hurricane Island anymore," Dixie added.

Both remained leaned out for a good while, gazing into nothingness. The trip, although it was going well and with all the tranquility of the world, was starting to become boring for both of them, as there was hardly anything to do. Nevertheless, they preferred that over continuing to have calamities like the ones they had already experienced for almost the entire journey.

"Hey, Diddy," she said as they continued to look up at the horizon. "Have you ever imagined if... Mr. Pinky would have adopted Jemky and the other three kids? I mean, since they were little, of course."

"Hey, that would have been crazy," Diddy replied, smiling with an expression of strangeness, but then he immediately became serious again. "Or not, wait... He would have had them better. Well, maybe he should have had enough patience with those four to correct and educate them, but... he would have treated them better... Hey, I hadn't thought that."

"He would have had them better off," Dixie added. "Or someone else who could have really had them well. Things with them would have been quite different... They lived through a real hell."

"It's that they actually... just wanted to find help, and nothing and nobody could really give them it, much less if they later adopted terrible behaviors... I wonder what those human doctors must have done with them when they found them there... 'asleep'."

"Maybe they have given their last goodbye to them with the large apes. And well... they must already be resting."

"Like... the Jennies, the real ones. We didn't meet those kids, but I can't imagine all the hell they lived through too and their end. The only thing that could be said to have gone right in this... is that the rest of all those other children were saved and are going to be helped," Diddy heaved a sigh as he rested his chin on the railing. "This world is awful, really."

"I know..." Dixie replied in kind. "And I also went through bad situations to confirm it. Sometimes, I've also wondered why I came to this world if it has awful things."

"Me too... That time Donkey told me my parents weren't coming back anymore... was really the end of the world for me for a long time; I was very little... Since then, I've only seen them in my dreams, like you," he said as he wiped his eyes after getting it somewhat moist. "But anyway... I love Donkey very much... He's the only one I have and he's who has always been with me... And I can't wait to see him again."

"You have to go get him as soon as we arrive; he must be waiting for you so much," Dixie said, placing a hand on Diddy's shoulder and smiling a little, before lowering her gaze and even adopting some sadness. "I... don't have anyone like that anymore, but... there are still my sister and cousins... And they're my only family, and I must still keep going for them... I hope to see them again too as soon as we arrive."

Dixie looked back at the horizon and leaned her chin on the railing, at the same time her eyes also moistened a little. Then, Diddy looked at her in the same way and wrapped his arm around her to embrace her for a while, to which she leaned her head on him while they both let the sadness pass.

"Diddy," Dixie said after a while and looked at him again. "And do you think it's true... that we're not going to love each other like this forever?"

Diddy looked back at her, and remained quiet for a few seconds after Mr. Pinky's words came to mind when Dixie mentioned that.

"Well... I'm not going to deny you, Dixie; I didn't understand it either, at least I do feel like I could love you this way forever. Well, it wouldn't *be forever*, but it would be as long as we live," he finished with a small smile.

"It's that... me too, Diddy. I couldn't imagine that; I'd like us to be together throughout our lives too."

"But who knows, because..." he said before lowering his gaze, "I think the things that Mr. Pinky told us... make a lot of sense, it may be true. So... I really think we shouldn't assume that this is going to last forever. I mean, just look at the things that happened to us, our lives aren't the best, we've both had insecurities or things to fix, we're very exposed to so many dangers, so... what he told us must be true. Even regarding what Jemky did to us, it's true, we could have avoided so much if we had handled it better... And so many things that could happen to us and even worse."

"Oh... Well... actually, it's true," Dixie replied, lowering her gaze as well. "And it's really all that complex... Because I don't want to deny you, Diddy, you've made me very happy... In fact, being with you is one of the things that has made me happiest in the midst of all this dark time," she added, smiling a little affectionately, before lowering her gaze again and sighing. "But... I don't even know if it's right to tell you like that."

"Well... the truth is that it doesn't sound wrong to me. I mean... you've made me very happy too, Dixie," he said, smiling back a little and placing a hand on her head. "In fact, you've also made me happy in the midst of all this and, I know it wasn't easy, but... we have managed to stay together. And among the things that make me happy, you're one of the most important... I even think it's the best, and no, I'm not just talking about our relationship, but... about having met you. But of course... maybe we shouldn't take things for granted, and we'd just have to... live this between the two of us while we can, as long as we both want to, and as long as we are in this world."

Dixie lowered her gaze, albeit in a pensive way. Then, she looked back at Diddy before answering him.

"Hey... it doesn't sound bad at all," she replied, smiling little by little. "I think it sounds much better... Because it's actually true... It's in vain almost everything, it's in vain to think that ours will last forever and even worry about it. We just... have to live it and enjoy it while we can, and then each of us continue taking care of it from... any adversity that crosses our path... Wow, that even sounds so much nicer," she added with a slight laugh.

"And it really is," Diddy added, holding Dixie's hand. "As Mr. Pinky told us: it's protecting our love from any obstacle that stands in our way, including ourselves. And that... we'll achieve it just by living it, in the middle of everything. So, Dix... I think we shouldn't worry about whether this will be forever or not, just living it and taking care of it now that we're together."

"I understand," Dixie said, smiling sweetly. "And I suppose it must also be true that there is no happy ending, rather... there are only happy moments. What's more... we are happy right now."

"Of course," he replied, caressing her hair while smiling at her. "For example, I'm happy right now that we're together and returning to DK Island," he added with a few small laughs. "If another storm doesn't cross our path."

"Hey, no, don't say that," Dixie said, giving him a slight push and following his laughter.

Both of them laughed a little as they continued to stay together. Then, they stared at each other, while they felt excitement again to be like this. Later, Diddy caressed Dixie's cheek again as he approached her, and then she did the same until they shared another kiss on the lips, with all the affection they had for each other. Both felt various emotions as their hearts beat at being close to each other.

"I love you so much, Dix," he said, still close to her and smiling at her. "And as long as we can, I want us to stay together and go far... Uh, I can't promise you anything, but... I want to try my best for us, so that we can stay well."

"So do I, Diddy," Dixie replied, smiling at him with tenderness and excitement at the same time. "I want this with you too, and manage to make it work better, and for nothing to come between us... Oh, well, *to try* to make sure nothing comes between us," she finished with a few small laughs.

Diddy gave a few small laughs too, before they kissed again and then continued to laugh. Both wanted to stay together without wanting to let go; the moment felt so nice for both of them that they wished to stop time so it wouldn't end... even if they had already understood that the future actually was uncertain, and that they only had to enjoy and take care of their love while they could.

The two kongs continued leaning out to look at the horizon, which was already darkening. This time, they stayed embraced, filled with great excitement both for returning home and for being together. From time to time, they went back to check the compass and ensure everything was going well, and then returned to look at the surroundings, even if there wasn't much to contemplate.

The return trip continued calmly, even though it seemed to take forever. Night had already fallen, and Diddy and Dixie kept ensuring that the boat didn't deviate. It was a bit more complicated to see in the darkness of those hours, so they had to rely on a couple of lamps that Mr. Pinky had given them.

Both also grabbed some fruits to eat, and drank water. They stayed awake for a couple more hours until sleep began to overtake them. But even though they both wished to sleep at the same time, they knew it was risky to do so, so they decided to take turns in order to get some rest, and that's what they did: one would go to sleep inside the cabin, while the other stayed by the helm to watch the compass... although the one who took the latter position also took a brief nap by the helm, but waking up after a few minutes. Even in the morning hours, they continued taking turns to sleep, due to the poor quality of sleep they had on the trip.

There were times both at night and in the early morning hours when the ship swayed or the weather turned bad, which scared them a little, even reaching a certain panic, but fortunately it never escalated.

During the afternoons, and even in the evening hours, both played, walked, and climbed all over the ship up to the masts, or they also stayed to talk and look at some distant island that could be seen along the way. Even if the trip was quite boring and exhausting at the same time, they tried not to make it seem so.

They saw two nights during the trip, which sometimes made them doubt if they were going the right way, but it was not the time to despair if what they wanted was to reach DK Island. After all, the trip would end at some point.

Chapter 100: After a Journey

Chapter Notes

Extensive chapter... but happy :3

About forty hours had passed in what Diddy and Dixie had been traveling, which seemed to them as if they had been sailing for a week. It was the second consecutive hours of the morning they saw, which made them wonder if they would see another day pass.

Dixie was sleeping in one of the cabins, not so far from the door; she had finished her turn to be watching the compass half an hour ago. Meanwhile, Diddy was right next to the helm... although he dozed at every moment too; the hours of taking turns sleeping had not been the best for both of them.

At one point, Diddy was dozing off over the map and compass, even if he struggled not to succumb to sleep. When suddenly... a sudden and thunderous wobbling jolted him awake and instantly heightened his senses. Those thunderous noises continued to be felt after a few seconds, which put Diddy on high alert.

Diddy immediately went to peer over the railing to see what was happening, as those noises seemed to be coming from the bottom of the ship. Suddenly, he noticed that there were some small rocks that appeared and then were covered by the sea, and the ship was crossing them.

He returned almost instantly to the helm to get out of that rocky area, but when he turned the helm... it seemed to have jammed, perhaps because of the rocks themselves. Diddy exerted much more force to try to turn the helm, even though he didn't have enough. Suddenly, the helm turned again, but as he was exerting force, Diddy accidentally turned it abruptly, causing the ship to turn sharply to the point of making him slip.

"Oh, no, no, no!" Diddy exclaimed again, almost throwing himself at the helm to regain control.

"What's going on?!" Dixie appeared leaving the cabin and heading to Diddy.

"There are some rocks underneath that are crashing the ship-"

Suddenly, another crash was felt, even causing Dixie to stumble down the steps. Then, she reached Diddy, who was still trying to force the helm when it got stuck again.

"I'll help you!" Dixie exclaimed, taking the helm along with Diddy, and between the two of them they tried to reactivate it.

But unfortunately, the helm abruptly got unstuck again, causing the ship to sway more forcefully and almost giving it a sideways tilt, as if it wanted to capsize. Diddy and Dixie immediately got up to continue trying to regain control of the ship.

"No! We're losing our way!" Dixie exclaimed, pointing to the compass.

Diddy also noticed that the compass seemed to indicate that they were going in the opposite direction, which was causing them to panic.

"We have to regain it! Let's go!" Diddy exclaimed again.

Diddy tried to turn, but this time... the helm felt too light, as if it no longer had validity. Both entered into greater desperation as they tried to handle the helm, but the ship no longer responded to them and just drifted.

"Oh, no, no, please!" Diddy exclaimed, turning the helm in vain, which turned like a simple ornamental wheel.

"We have to find a way to fix--"

Suddenly, both were almost thrown off the deck when a more abrupt wobble than the previous ones was felt throughout the ship... It was as if it had crashed, since it even splashed water.

"Now what?!" Dixie exclaimed, getting up hurriedly.

Diddy and Dixie were going to head towards the bow... but not before feeling as if the ship was losing height and tilting backwards.

"Geez! *Let's get the emergency boat! Come on!*" Diddy exclaimed desperately. "And let's grab what we need!"

The ship kept tilting and now creaking, which didn't mean anything good. So, Dixie rushed to grab a few things as fast as her limbs could give her, while Diddy went to find a way to get the emergency boat out, before Dixie ran to help him.

Later, they managed to launch the boat, throwing objects onto it, and then throwing themselves into the sea to swim to the boat. Upon boarding, they shook off the water and took the items to arrange them; they had boarded some fruit, Mr. Pinky's box, the compass, and the map, which had been slightly torn because they had ripped it out.

"It's all fine!" Diddy exclaimed, finishing checking the items and testing the compass.

Then, while still catching their breath, they turned to look at the ship, which had now become still... but it was also damaged and leaning against some rocks, after crashing into a large one. They both stood there gaping at the ship, seeing that from one moment to the next it had become unusable. Afterwards, they looked at each other with the same expression, not knowing what to do next.

"And... now?" Dixie asked, still unable to recover from the state of shock.

"Uhh... At least we're okay, right?" Diddy said with a forced smile as he looked back at the ship.

"Urgh! Misfortune pursues us!" Dixie exclaimed, banging on the boat's side. "Why?!"

"No, this can't be happening!" Diddy added, recovering his senses in the same way. "And now how do we go?!... Ugh, why didn't I notice those rocks?"

"And now what do we do?" Dixie wondered, looking in frustration at Diddy. "Why did our ship break down?"

"We have to see where we're now!" Diddy exclaimed, looking up at the compass and trying to position it back in the direction they were before. Then, he looked up in that direction. "It seems that it's over there; we're-"

Suddenly, Diddy was paralyzed for a few seconds, at the same time he had a sudden feeling inside. He hadn't noticed what was in sight and it was as if he was just really reacting.

"What if we stay to see if we can do something for the ship?" Dixie said on the other hand. "We can-"

"Hey, hey, Dixie! L-look! Look at that!" Diddy interrupted, taking her arm and pointing in a direction in the distance.

Dixie gave him a look of strangeness at seeing Diddy with a sudden excitement. She proceeded to look where he was pointing and, instantly... she also adopted a gaping expression and a huge smile was drawn on her face after seeing what was in the distance... An island that from afar was seen with a sculptural form of nobody else and nobody less than... Donkey Kong... It was the very... *DK Island*.

"Is it... I-I can't believe it," Dixie exclaimed, still looking at Diddy with a broad smile.

"DK Island!" Diddy exclaimed, jumping with excitement. "It's DK Island!"

"*DK Island!*" Dixie exclaimed louder and with more excitement.

"*It's that! That's it! It's DK Island!*" Diddy added while pointing at it.

"*We found it!*" Dixie added, jumping with excitement.

Both, with all the emotion alive, embraced each other with such joy, that they even forgot from one moment to another that the ship had broken down. The two looked at each other without being able to contain so much excitement, that they even felt that they'd explode with happiness as soon as they reached their expected destination.

"We've done it, Dix!" Diddy exclaimed, holding her shoulders with excitement. "We're home!"

Dixie threw herself into hugging him still with the same emotion for a few seconds; both had never felt so excited in this way during their entire journey.

"Come on, let's go, we have to go there!" Diddy exclaimed, looking for the paddles of the boat.

"Hey, but... what about the ship?" Dixie said, having a doubtful expression again.

"Oh... I don't know," Diddy replied, scratching his head, with a forced smile. "What if we come to see it later or ask someone for help? What do you say?"

"Well... it's not that far away after all," Dixie replied, looking towards DK Island in the distance. "So, let's go; we're not leaving anything behind, right?"

Both took one last look at the objects they had on board, before closing the matter and resuming their trip. Then, they each took a paddle, and they began to sail the boat. The current wasn't so bad, that they didn't know if it favored them in the direction they were going or if it was the very excitement that kept them motivated to paddle.

DK Island, of which they were now quite sure that it was that, was at a far distance, but at the same time reachable for the sight of both. The two couldn't help but feel excited to see their home island again. Along the way, they both took the only fruits they had left to eat, as hunger was also invading them in the midst of the situation. Then, they continued paddling continuously, getting closer and closer to the island and confirming that, indeed, *it was DK Island!*

Several minutes later, they stopped paddling to rest for a while, while they looked at DK Island more and more closely. With the same excitement, they couldn't wait, above all, to see the Kong family members. Then, Dixie began to check again the objects they had on board.

"We'll just carry the compass, the map, and Mr. Pinky's box," Dixie said, taking the things for unloading as soon as they arrived.

"By the way, we can't forget to give that box to Wrinkly," Diddy added.

Suddenly, Dixie remembered another detail she had... She took off her beret and took that missing object; it was the emerald, which was now fragmented in half.

"Hey, Diddy," she said, handing him that emerald. "Now that all this is over... I guess you can take it with you now."

Diddy got serious when he saw Dixie hand him the deep green stone; suddenly, he remembered that moment where Dixie had given it to him. After taking it, he watched it while still thinking... Until after a few seconds, he sighed and returned it to Dixie in her hands, earning a look of strangeness from her.

"No, Dix. Keep it," Diddy said, smiling. "It's yours."

"What?" Dixie said, still looking at him strangely and handing it to him again. "Hey, but it was already yours."

"Yes, I know," Diddy continued, returning it to her. "But actually, this emerald is yours; it was a gift for you first. Besides, I know that you'll know how to take better care of it. We two... are actually still just beginning this thing of loving each other," he added with a few light laughs, before placing his hands on hers along with the emerald. "Maybe after some time you can give me a gift with a special meaning. So... keep it yourself for now, Dix, along with Tiny, Kiddy and Chunky."

Dixie continued to look at him seriously and as if such an answer was not expected. But after a few seconds, she looked at the emerald again and smiled normally.

"It's okay, Diddy," she said, smiling at him and holding the stone better. "In fact... it's true."

Diddy smiled back at her, and then gave her a kiss on the cheek sweetly. Dixie leaned on him, and then he embraced her for a while, as they both enjoyed being.

"Hey, Diddy," she said after they parted. "How will we see everyone again? Do you think they're in our houses right now?"

"They must be; I want to see them all," Diddy replied, looking towards DK Island. Then, he stood pensively for a moment as he smiled calmly. "Wow, I can't believe we managed to get back, and we're going to see them again."

"They won't believe us all the journey we had," Dixie said in the same way and without losing sight of DK Island. Suddenly, her expression took on a certain seriousness, though with a slight smile as well. "I can't wait to tell all this to Tiny, Kiddy and Chunky... Surely, it'll be of some comfort to us... that the memory of our parents will now rest better."

"You have to tell them," Diddy said, placing a hand on her shoulder and smiling serenely. "Tell them that finally there was justice for you and even for many animals, that we managed to make it happen... And truly, I hope it can bring you all some comfort... because you deserve to be happy."

Dixie continued to look at him while her eyes had moistened a little, but wiped her tears after a while and smiled back more calmly.

"And we wouldn't have made it without you either... I'll always be grateful to you, Diddy," she replied, before giving him a hug for a few seconds. "And you... will talk to Donkey, right?" she asked him after a while.

"Well... of course," Diddy replied with a forced smile and scratching his head. "Oh... it's true; now I'll have to tell him everything head-on," he added, showing some insecurity. "I hope we don't have another argument like-"

"No, no, Diddy... He'll know how to listen to you," Dixie said, smiling with a hand on his shoulder. "I know you'll be well, just talk to him, trust Donkey... He'll even be glad you learned."

"Well... okay," Diddy replied, heaving a sigh and smiling back with a sincere expression.

Dixie nodded to him, and the two embraced again after a few seconds. Both could not wait any longer to be reunited with their respective relatives.

"Hey, and by the way..." Diddy said later, with a somewhat shy expression. "Are we also going to tell them about... us, right?"

"It's true, we hadn't thought about it," Dixie replied almost in the same way, laughing a little. "But yes... Of course. At least we could talk about it with our closest ones for now."

"And what time do we tell them?" Diddy asked with a little laugh. "Will we give them a surprise or tell them directly?"

"We can tell them later after telling them everything that happened to us... Anyway, our relationship was part of our journey too," she ended with a smile.

Later, both paddled again to accelerate the arriving to DK Island. The island was getting closer until it seemed as if they had only sailed away from there to venture out to sea. Both couldn't wait to set their feet on the island's sand; they wished they had known a couple of weeks ago that they would manage to return there.

"We're close; just a little bit more," Diddy said as they continued to paddle with concentration.

They paddled for several more minutes, until they almost reached the shores of the beach. DK Island was totally in front of their eyes.

"Almost there; we have to paddle harder," Diddy exclaimed as they were about to arrive.

Later, both had already reached the area where the waves began to break. The boat was rocking up and down with the movement of the waves, so they had to apply a little more force to paddle. The waves were becoming increasingly weaker, indicating that they had arrived.

"Alright, let's get down here," Dixie said, stopping paddling.

At the end, Diddy and Dixie got off the boat and put their feet on the water of the beach, which reached a little above their knees. They began to push the boat to take it to the shore, where they had to make a little more force when they reached the firm sand.

Both took a few last strong breaths when they stopped completely. Afterwards... they looked up at everything in front of them, and then they also looked at their feet, which, finally... *were on DK Island...* The two looked at each other as huge smiles appeared on their faces and they could feel how the universe had taken pity on the two of them after so much.

"We are... at home," Diddy said in a calm tone at first, before showing all the excitement. "*We're here, Dixie!*"

Dixie made the same gesture before launching into hugging Diddy with the same intensity of excitement. Both were so excited, that they could say they forgot all kinds of bad events that they experienced along their journey.

"*We did it, Diddy, we did it!*" Dixie exclaimed, taking Diddy's shoulders with excitement.

The two continued to hug and look at each other with all the happiness they had. They jumped with excitement at the same time that their hearts did too. They looked at all the environment in front of them and, definitely, that was DK Island; they no longer had doubts.

"Come on, we have to look for the others!" Diddy said, taking Dixie's arm, still not calming the excitement.

Both began to run through the sand using their four limbs; it's been a long time since they felt like they were running with that level of excitement along a beach. The area where they were was quite familiar to them, so they stopped to see if they could find any of the Kongs.

"What if we go to see our houses?" Dixie said as they watched everywhere.

"I'd say yes; I don't see anyone here- Wait!" Diddy exclaimed, stopping to look in a direction in the distance. "Isn't that..."

"Funky?" Dixie asked, spotting too.

"Yes, yes, yes it's him!" Diddy replied, pointing at him. "It's Funky's cabin. Let's go see him!"

Diddy and Dixie headed towards the pier where they had spotted that beach cabin where Funky lived. They took one last look at the boat to make sure there was no inconvenience, and then ran towards the cabin.

Upon arrival, they started to look for Funky or some kong that was around, but it seemed that he was absent at that time.

"Where did he go?" Diddy asked, looking everywhere. "We saw him clearly around here."

"Hey, Diddy, look at that," Dixie pointed in one direction of the cabin.

They both looked towards what Dixie was pointing at and, to the enormous curiosity of the two... it was a large photo of them that, if they remember correctly, Funky had taken a few months ago. The photo was on one of the tables among Funky's belongings from his workshop.

"But... what is this?" Diddy asked, looking in detail at the photo.

The photo was framed and with the names of the two written on it. It also had some small colorful flowers in the corners.

"Wow, would this be for us?" Dixie wondered, looking at the photo seriously. "It seems to be--"

"But what is this?!"

Diddy and Dixie looked at each other the instant they heard a voice other than theirs... although they recognized it perfectly. They turned to look, and saw in the distance that gorilla with glasses and workshop clothes, who seemed to have come out of his cabin and with an expression shocked in its entirety.

"It's Funky!" Diddy said to Dixie, before calling him. "*Funky!*"

Diddy and Dixie immediately ran in the direction of Funky, who had initially frozen to see them both, but then reacted and headed towards them at an accelerated pace too.

"Funky!" Diddy and Dixie exclaimed in unison as they reached him.

"Diddy! Dixie!" Funky exclaimed as if he didn't believe his eyes, before the two hugged him with excitement. Afterwards, Funky hugged them too, and then began to observe them, still looking surprised. "I can't believe it, I can't believe it, I can't believe it... *It's you!* It's Diddy and Dixie! And, and, and... You're alive! You're alive! Are you okay?! Are you fine?!"

"Yeah, yeah, of course!" Diddy and Dixie answered simultaneously, still with excitement.

"W-where were you?! What happened to yo--"

"Okay, it's okay, Funky!" Diddy replied, calming him down with a little laughter. "First of all, we're fine, everything is alright. And well... it's a long story."

"Hey, is it t-true that you were kidnapped by circus tamers?" Funky asked them, still unable to recover from shock. "And, and that you were on an island and I don't know what else?!"

"Uh, yes, yes, b-but... how do you know?" Dixie asked, looking at him strangely along with Diddy.

"So... it was true," Funky said, looking more astonished, before changing his expression. "You sent some letters here a few weeks ago, right?!"

"Ahh, yes, of course," Diddy replied smiling, before looking astonished. "Wait... so, did you all receive them?"

"Yes, yes, yes!" Funky replied quickly. "Some letters had arrived from you for Donkey, Chunky, Tiny and Kiddy; they told us that you had written that you were on an island and had left a circus."

Diddy and Dixie looked at each other in amazement, but at the same time with enormous relief to at least know that their letters had indeed arrived.

"Hey, that's great!" Diddy exclaimed, smiling. "And by the way, how have you all been? Is everything alright? Are Donkey and the others okay?"

"Well, yes, as far as being okay goes," Funky replied in kind, before adopting absolute seriousness. "Oh, but now that you ask... you can't imagine how worried we've been about you two, especially Dixie's family and Donkey; believe me, they were very distressed. Some of us even went to try to find you where Enguarde told us he had left Dixie, but... we had to come back anyway because we almost got caught in a storm due to those hurricanes. Even that big picture of you over there is from a mural we made for you. However, with the letters you sent us, believe me, it brought some relief to your dear relatives."

"Wow, I figured as much," Dixie replied after listening to Funky. "We were also quite worried about everyone, especially at night. Finding a post office there was also a small relief for us; we didn't know how to get back here."

"And not to mention everything that happened to us afterwards; it's another long story," Diddy added earnestly. "Hey, and... do you know if Donkey and the others are at our houses right now?"

"Oh, yes, yes, as far as I know," Funky replied, nodding. "What's more... if you want, I'm going to call them all *right now*, what do you think, little friends?"

"Yes, yes, of course," Diddy and Dixie replied consecutively.

"Great, then wait here," Funky said, looking excited again. "We'll give them a pleasant surprise, don't move."

Afterwards, Funky withdrew as quickly as his amazement gave him. Meanwhile, Diddy and Dixie looked at each other with a few small laughs, at the same time that they were excited again as at the moment they arrived, and hugged once more.

"Hey, Dix, by the way, let's bring the boat here," Diddy said.

"Oh, that's right!" Dixie exclaimed. "We have to unload everything."

Then, they both ran back to where they had left the boat beached; they couldn't forget the things they had brought either. They pushed the boat for a while, as it was on the shores. When they stopped it again near Funky's cabin, they began to unload the objects, of which there were only a couple of fruits, the compass, the map and the box that they had to deliver to Wrinkly.

They were placing the small objects on one of the tables in the cabin, when suddenly, they saw that two more kongs appeared near them: one of them was a gorilla in bright vests and another an orangutan in overalls.

"Swanky! Lanky!" Diddy exclaimed, glad to see them along with Dixie.

"Holy heavens! It's Diddy and Dixie!" Swanky exclaimed, showing the same expressions like Funky. "It's you!"

"No, no, I can't believe this!" Lanky added in the same way. "It was true! It's the little ones!"

Diddy and Dixie ran to hug each one quickly and excitedly, while Lanky and Swanky continued to be so amazed to see them, as if they couldn't believe it.

"For heaven's sake! You're alive!" Lanky exclaimed, looking excitedly at the two of them. "H-how are you?! It's alright?! What happened to you two?!"

"We're fine, we're fine, don't worry," Diddy replied, smiling and reassuring them. "It was just... a long history."

"Is it true that you were kidnapped in a circus?!" Swanky asked them, still not recovering from the shock of seeing them. "And is it true that you stayed on an island?!"

"Yes, yes, that was what happened," Dixie replied in the same way as Diddy. "Although, well... many other things happened too."

"But I can't believe it," Lanky added, still in amazement. "I-I mean, you don't know how worried we were about the two of you; first by Diddy who didn't show up, and then by Dixie who had gone to search for him and didn't come back, and not to mention what Dixie had told us about your classmates; we thought they had something to do with this, and also about the ape boy found in the river!"

"By the way, we didn't hear anything more about that case," Swanky added with some concern. "Oh, there really was too much uncertainty while you were gone; we thought there was some kind of child thief!"

"Uhh, hey... about that..." Dixie said with a tone of insecurity. "Actually... we do have an answer to that case; in fact... it's solved."

"What are you saying?!" Swanky and Lanky exclaimed, looking at them strangely instantly.

"W-well, it's a *delicate* matter; we'll tell you later," Dixie replied with a forced smile. "But I don't think you need to worry anymore... It's all resolved so to speak, so don't worry... There's no actual child thief."

"Wait, then... how's the matter really?" Swanky asked with a look of strangeness.

"Geez, I got confused now," Lanky added in confusion, before smiling at them again. "But hey, the most important thing now: you guys are all fine, right?"

"Yes, yes, of course," Diddy replied, smiling at them along with Dixie. "And much better now that we arrived here."

"Oh, that's good, little ones," Lanky told them, smiling back. "It really has been a long few months without you."

"I know, it was for us too," Diddy said with a calm smile. "You can't imagine everything that happened to--"

Suddenly, Diddy was interrupted by Dixie, who began to pull his arm and point in one direction. Diddy immediately turned to look at where Dixie was pointing and... both his expression and hers suddenly changed, as if they were seeing Hurricane Island or DK Island again after so long. The two continued to be paralyzed for a few more seconds, while trembling and their heartbeats were

accelerating more and more: from a distance, they could see a gorilla wearing a red tie running from one corner, and from another one farther away, three more young kongs were approaching, whom Diddy and Dixie did not take long to recognize.

Both looked at each other still amazed and at the same time with a gradual excitement as enormous as never before. Immediately, the two began to run towards the silhouettes of those kongs they had seen; they had really waited for that moment for months, and they could not believe it was already happening.

"*DONKEY!*" Diddy shouted as he ran with his four limbs in a hurry.

"*TINY!*" Dixie shouted in the same way, but veering to another direction where she had just spotted her loved ones. "*KIDDY! CHUNKY!*"

Both Diddy and Dixie ran everything their limbs gave them, towards their relatives. Both groups were each in a corner, so the two ran in different directions. In one corner was none other than *Donkey Kong*, while at another point, and somewhat further away, came Tiny, Kiddy and Chunky.

"*Donkey!*" Diddy exclaimed again, getting closer to reaching him and seeing him clearly.

Donkey, who had also noticed Diddy's presence, got an expression of enormous astonishment and as if he did not finish processing what he was seeing.

"Diddy?..." Donkey uttered in a low, almost static voice, before coming to his senses and running towards his nephew as well. "*Diddy! Little buddy!*"

Being less than a meter away and without thinking about it, Diddy threw himself straight into Donkey's arms, and hugged him with such excitement that he could not control it at that moment.

"Donkey!..." Diddy exclaimed, clinging to him with all his might and beginning to have his eyes moistened.

"Diddy!" Donkey exclaimed, hugging him with the same emotion and the same expression. "*Little buddy! It's you! You're here! Diddy!*"

"*Donkey...*" Diddy uttered again, this time bursting into tears as if he was showing all his emotions at that moment. Seeing and being so close to Donkey after so much, made him feel at home... *truly at home this time.*

"Little buddy, I can't believe it, I can't believe it!" Donkey exclaimed with tears in his eyes too, before holding him in the air and looking at his face with such excitement. "*It's you, Diddy! You're alive, you're fine!* No, no, I can't believe it!"

"I missed you, Donkey!" Diddy exclaimed, embracing him again as tight as he could, as he sobbed and his tears rolled down his face continuously.

"I missed you too, little buddy..." Donkey replied, embracing him too like a father who hadn't seen his son in so long. "I thought I wouldn't see you again," he added, shedding tears as well.

On the other hand, Dixie was also a few meters away from reaching where her loved ones were, who also, as soon as they noticed her presence, ran towards her without thinking at all.

"*Tiny! Kiddy! Chunky!*" Dixie exclaimed, less than a couple of meters away from them.

"DIXIE! DIXIE!" the three exclaimed simultaneously and continuously, crowding around.

Without further thought, Tiny threw herself into hugging Dixie immediately, followed by Kiddy and then Chunky, who completed the group and even lifted the three of them. The four remained embraced for several seconds, with all the excitement they could feel upon meeting again. Dixie just felt a huge sense of refuge being able to be close to her family again and after the whole journey.

"Dixie!" Tiny exclaimed as she hugged her sister tightly and shed tears instantly. "I-I missed you! I thought we wouldn't see you again!"

"Me too... *I missed you all so much*," Dixie replied, breaking down in tears too, as did the others.

"Chunky missed you very much, too," he said as they continued in the group embrace and with tears in their eyes.

"Are you okay, Dixie?! Tell me you are!" Tiny said, breaking away from the hug but not letting go of Dixie either.

"Of course I am; everything is alright!" Dixie replied through tears, but smiling at the three of them at the same time, while quickly recalling the entire journey. "Everything... is alright now... It's all over."

"You don't know how much we were begging for you to come back!" Tiny said in tears.

"And, and what happened?!" Chunky asked hurriedly, as they four let go. "Why didn't you come back again? Is it true that you went for Diddy to a circus and then you two stayed on an island?!"

"Yes... that's what happened, although... I really have a lot to tell you, that's not all," Dixie replied, wiping away her tears and emitting a sigh; she didn't know whether to be exhausted due to the journey or glad that it was over. "Hey, and... then you received the letters I sent you?"

"The letters? Of course!" Tiny replied, jumping a little. "You don't know how much those letters reassured us!"

"You wrote to us that you were with Diddy on an island and that in three weeks you'd be back," Chunky added. "We were glad to hear that at least you two were fine. Although you took a little longer, it seems to me."

"Oh, it's because that really wasn't all," Dixie replied earnestly. "Much more things happened to us, to the point that... we came out alive by miracle. But no, don't worry, everything is alright..." she added, looking at them with tears in her eyes and at the same time smiling at each one with a joy like never before. "I must even tell you that... we'll no longer have to worry about us... We have had real justice."

"What?... What are you talking about?" Tiny asked, looking at her strangely at what she was saying.

"I'll have to tell you well; you really wouldn't believe me," Dixie replied, still smiling at them. "But for now I can tell you that... it's not something that's going to fix our lives, but at least it'll reassure you."

Dixie was eager to tell them everything that had happened, but there were so many details that she knew she had to set aside some time to tell them in order. Even so, she felt that seeing each member of her short family again and thinking that there was justice for everything they had to go through, filled her with strength and tranquility.

On the other hand, and at the same time, Diddy was still excited as he embraced Donkey with all the excitement he had and with tears of joy. When they parted, Donkey put Diddy back on the ground, but still holding him due to the excitement he had of seeing him.

"Little buddy..." Donkey said, looking at him with joy, before examining him. "W-what happened to you?! Is e-everything okay?! Haven't you got hurt or something?! Are you complete?! Tell me yes!"

"Yes, yes, yes, of course!" Diddy replied with the same energy. "Everything is alright, all right."

"Is it true that you were taken to a circus?!" Donkey exclaimed, showing concern. "Didn't someone hurt you?!"

"Yes, yes, that was what happened," Diddy replied quickly. "And then we were going to return, but a storm dragged us to another island and we couldn't do it. You received my letter, right?"

"Yes, yes, of course I received it, little buddy... You don't know how happy I was because of that; you can't imagine how worried we were; I haven't even been able to sleep well. And, and what were those circus tamers like? Did they hurt you?"

"Oh, those monsters were the worst; you couldn't imagine. It's a long history; I have too much to tell you. Even in these last weeks, more things happened to us that you wouldn't believe... But everything is alright," Diddy finished with a small smile, before heaving a sigh and lowering his gaze again seriously. "Oh, Donkey... but I'm really sorry, I didn't want all this to happen like this. Besides... I know you may already know about *that matter* I never wanted to tell you and-"

"Hey, hey, no, Diddy," Donkey interrupted, patting him lightly on the shoulder and smiling in a calm way. "I know... I know what you're trying to say. And yes, Dixie had to tell us before she left to search for you, and it's okay, it was something you shouldn't have hidden from me, but... it's also okay that you've learned and acknowledged it."

"I know... I was never able to do it because I truly thought those four kids would harm you or cause us even greater harm. Although well... there has been a long story about them too; there's also a lot to talk about that."

"Okay, little buddy," Donkey replied as he placed a hand on his shoulder, before looking away and changing his expression. "Hey, by the way, what about Dixie?"

"Ah, yeah, yeah, she's here too," Diddy said, also looking away. "She's over there, let's go!"

Diddy pointed to the distance where Dixie was with Tiny, Kiddy and Chunky. Then, he and Donkey headed towards them, at the same time that the group of four young kongs was looking and pointing at them in the distance, and then also headed for the reunion. When both groups saw each other, they all ran to gather in one group.

"Hi, Donkey!" Dixie exclaimed as she ran when they were near.

"Dixie!" Donkey replied as he ran too.

"Diddy!" Tiny, Kiddy and Chunky exclaimed.

"Chunky, Tiny, Kiddy!" Diddy exclaimed in the same way.

When they all met, the hugs couldn't be missing, to the point where it felt like a celebration.

"Dixie!" Donkey exclaimed as he gave Dixie a quick hug with excitement. "Glad to see you again too!"

"Diddy!" Chunky and Tiny, even Kiddy, exclaimed, as they also hugged him as a group. "We miss you too! You're back!"

"Ohh, you two don't know how worried we were about you!" Donkey said to Diddy and Dixie, holding them by the shoulders. "It's truly amazing that you're here!"

"You can't imagine what these last few months have been like without you," Tiny added in the same way. "We thought we weren't going to see you again."

"So do we," Dixie replied, smiling. "We thought we weren't coming back. But in the end, everything--"

"Diddy! Dixie!" another voice different to all those who were in the group exclaimed.

Everyone turned and saw the very Candy, who had arrived and was surprised to see the two newly arrived little kongs.

"Candy!" Diddy and Dixie exclaimed in unison and ran to her.

"Holy heavens! It's truly you!" Candy exclaimed as she hugged them with excitement. "You're fine! How have you been?! You made us worried!"

"We're fine, don't worry," Diddy replied, smiling calmly and breaking away from the hug.

"It was a long journey, but everything is alright," Dixie added in the same way.

"Oh, you don't know how glad I'm to see you safe again," Candy added in the same way as everyone else, while Diddy and Dixie kept smiling at them and looking excited too.

Suddenly, Diddy and Dixie caught sight of another pair of kongs approaching the scene; this time it was a pair of elderly apes, who upon noticing the presence of Diddy and Dixie, also gasped and as if they could not believe their eyes.

"Cranky! Wrinkly!" Diddy and Dixie exclaimed, heading towards them.

"But it's the kids!" Cranky exclaimed, in amazement.

"Holy heavens! The little ones!" Wrinkly exclaimed, bursting with excitement.

Diddy and Dixie also quickly but excitedly hugged Cranky and Wrinkly, the latter being whom they had not seen for so long.

"For heaven's sake!" Wrinkly exclaimed, unable to contain her joy as she held each of them by the faces. "But it's you two! You're fine! You're back! What a joy to see you, little ones!"

"Wow, wow, wow, I can't believe this!" Cranky added, also looking cheerful and surprised. "You two are here! You're fine! We didn't think you'd come back, but you're here!"

"Are you okay, children? Haven't you been hurt?" Wrinkly asked, showing concern and examining them like a mother.

"Well... yes, we actually have been hurt," Dixie replied with a slight smile, "but don't worry, we're fine now."

"It's a long story," Diddy added in the same way.

"By the way, we haven't seen you two in a long time," Dixie said later. "How have you been?"

"Oh, at first everything was fine on our trip," Wrinkly replied. "But you wouldn't believe how I almost had a fit when we arrived and found out you had been missing for days."

"They even told us that they had found a wounded boy in the river," Cranky added with some astonishment. "And also, that those little friends of Diddy were bully boys."

"That's right, Diddy," Wrinkly added in the same way. "Is it true that your four little friends have been getting into trouble and bullying you? Why didn't you tell me anything before?"

"Uhh, well... yes, it's true," Diddy replied a little embarrassed at the sudden question and because he was now confessing it directly. "It's that... Oh, I really didn't have the courage back then," he added, his gaze lowered and rubbing his arm. "I'm sorry..."

"It's also a long s-story," Dixie added, trying to help him and with a forced smile. "I think we should set aside some time to tell it in detail."

"Oh, yeah! The family reunited again!" exclaimed another voice, which belonged to Funky.

Funky along with Lanky and Swanky had appeared again to integrate with the entire Kong family, which was already complete again.

"Wow, it's really a miracle that the two little ones are back here," Lanky added, taking each one of them by shoulders.

"This deserves a celebration!" Swanky exclaimed with excitement, before calming down again. "Or well... it depends on how everyone feels, of course."

Diddy and Dixie just smiled as all the other kongs kept exclaiming words of excitement at their arrival, hugging them and even lifting them into the air. Although between times, they all also asked them questions about it, as expected.

"You know? We even went to try to search for you two," Donkey told them. "Enguarde was going to lead us to the city where he had left Dixie, but the weather was unmanageable and we couldn't do anything... Believe me, we almost thought that we wouldn't see you anymore because of that; the weather seemed to have strong storms ahead and some fatal waves."

"Well, you weren't wrong," Dixie replied. "That's exactly how the weather conditions were due to those hurricanes."

"We had forgotten that the hurricanes in the North were passing through these last few months," Funky added.

"And by the way, children," Wrinkly said to the two, still showing doubts. "W-what was going on with those four boys? We haven't even seen them around here again; the school year is even already starting. Do you know anything about them?"

Even if the arrival of Diddy and Dixie had been exciting for both of them, it was to be expected that they would be bombarded with questions... Questions with answers that had too much context, that they didn't know how to start explaining.

"Well, actually... we have had contact with them," Diddy replied earnestly. "In fact, they were present on our journey in recent weeks."

"What?!" the others exclaimed simultaneously and all showing more confusion. "What are you saying?"

"So, those kids had something to do with your disappearance too?!" Donkey asked as if to be alarmed. "So, do you know where those kids are?"

"Where are those kids?" Wrinkly asked them again.

"Uh, well, they had something to do with it, but not entirely," Dixie replied, not knowing how to start explaining. "And we know where they are, although... they won't come back anymore."

"What are you saying?" Wrinkly exclaimed, looking more confused, just like everyone else. "What do you mean by that?"

"Hey, it's r-really all complex," Diddy replied in the same way as Dixie. "It's truly a long story with many details; we need to organize everything to tell you properly."

"Wow, that sounds pretty interesting," Funky commented, looking more confused. "I think we need to organize a meeting to talk about it, brothers."

"And by the way, Mrs. Wrinkly," Dixie said to Wrinkly. "You had sent someone named Pinky Kong to be our teacher, hadn't you?"

"Oh, yes, yes, the same one," Wrinkly replied with a smile again. "Mr. Pinky. Of course, I had heard good references about him, and besides, he himself wanted to take on the position of teacher. And well, how did he behave? By the way, is it true that you also ran into him on that island where you were?"

"Of course we do; that's where he lives," Diddy replied. "To be honest, he was quite strict at first when he taught us, but when we were on the island, he was totally different; he wasn't bad after all, he even became our friend," he added, smiling, before remembering a detail. "Oh, and by the way, he left us some documents to give to you. Yeah, to Cranky too; it's for both of you."

"What? What about me?" Cranky said immediately and with a look of strangeness. "I'm not a teacher; what do I have to do there?"

"I don't know, but that's what he told us," Dixie reaffirmed.

"Hey, but what did those evil kids have to do with it?" Lanky asked them again curiously. "And what do you mean with recent weeks?"

"Were they from that circus that caught you or how?" Swanky added in the same way.

"Well, I think we have to organize things first, friends," Candy said, trying to calm them down. "I think Diddy and Dixie still need to finish processing everything; they have to rest first, okay?... Uh, Diddy and Dixie, don't you want to go to your houses to take a rest first? And you can tell us about your journey later, what do you think?"

"Well, actually, yes," Dixie replied with a slight smile, as did Diddy. "Besides... for certain reasons, I think we should talk about all this in private first."

"Okay, then whenever you're ready, buddies," Funky said, smiling at them. "Feel at home first."

"We could meet up later, as Funky suggested," Donkey added to everyone. "Because I understand... Diddy and Dixie may be very tired right now. So, will we meet later?"

Everyone else nodded while murmuring words of agreement with the proposal. Meanwhile, Diddy and Dixie hugged their respective family members again, who were both excited and relieved to have them close again.

The Kongs began to disperse a little, while both Diddy and Dixie prepared to go home each, but not before passing by collecting the few things they had brought, among them, the box they had to deliver to Wrinkly and Cranky, which they went to deliver to them immediately.

Later, Diddy and Dixie bid a temporary farewell, exchanging smiling gestures as a sign of being able to share *a specific news* with their families. Then, each went with their own group: Diddy with Donkey, and Dixie with Tiny, Kiddy, and Chunky.

"You're going to have to tell us everything, sister," Tiny told Dixie with a curious tone and shaking her arm, as they walked home.

"By the way, what happened to those evil kids in the end?" Chunky asked her in a low voice, looking around stealthily. "And so, that orangutan boy did come out alive after the shot you gave him?"

"And just in case, we didn't tell anyone anything about that, as we promised," Tiny added, whispering as well.

"I'll tell you, I'll tell you," Dixie replied, calming them down and speaking in a low voice too. "But yes, he came out alive, although... those four children are no longer here anyways. I'll tell you later what happened."

"What?! Did you two defeat them or what?" Chunky asked, showing astonishment. "What do you mean they're no longer here? So..."

"Y-yes, yes, that..." Dixie replied with some insecurity after recalling it. "Uh, and well, we did defeat them, but they didn't exactly end up in our hands... I'll tell you all about it too... Oh, and you won't believe *who* those four kids' dads were, or well... their adoptive dads."

"What?" Tiny exclaimed, increasing her curiosity. "What are you talking about now?"

"Hey, you really have a lot to tell, from what I see," Chunky added in the same way.

"Wait, later, as soon as we arrive, I'll tell you," Dixie replied, calming them down and refraining from further details for the time being.

Dixie had so many things to tell them that at times she was tempted to tell everything in summary, but she knew that the whole journey had so many details and contexts that she had to find a moment of calm to tell it properly. Suddenly, as they continued walking... something came to her mind.

"Uhh, hey..." Dixie said to the three of them. Even if there was a lot to tell, she wanted to at least tell them *certain news*. "I think... for now, I can tell you *something* important that you have to know..." she added, looking down at the ground and with a little shyness.

"Huh? And now what is it?" Tiny asked, reactivating her enormous curiosity along with the others.

"In fact, I mentioned it to you in the letter," Dixie added with a small smile. "Or well, I *almost* mentioned it... It's *about Diddy*," she said, widening her smile.

Chunky, Tiny and Kiddy made an expression of strangeness, and at the same time surprise, at Dixie's unexpected words.

"What are you saying? What about Diddy?" Chunky asked, curiously. "Wait! Are you meaning-"

"Uh, well, the thing is..." Dixie said, taking a breath before answering well. "Diddy and I... are a couple."

The three of them widened their eyes to the fullest as soon as Dixie uttered the latter words. She had been a little nervous to tell it, but anyway, she knew she was going to do it.

"W-what?! What did you say?!" Tiny exclaimed, all astonished and as if she couldn't believe it either.

"What did you just say?!" Chunky added in the same way, holding her by the shoulders. "Is that true?!"

"Yes, yes, of course," Dixie replied with a slight laugh and blushing a little. "Of course it's true."

"Hey, it has to be a joke!" Tiny exclaimed, shaking her arm again with some excitement. "Tell me it's not a joke! And h-how long have you been dating?"

"How did it all happen?!" Chunky asked rather curiously. "Was it all during the journey?"

"Was it a romantic journey after all?" Tiny added.

"Well, I can't consider it romantic as such; a lot of things happened," Dixie replied, not knowing how to begin to explain it in detail. "But yeah... Yeah, we're together now," she added, smiling again.

"Oh, no, you have to really tell us everything," Tiny exclaimed, jumping with excitement. "Tell us about that first!"

"I can't believe it yet!" Chunky added in the same way. "You have to tell us well!"

"Yeah, of course," Dixie replied, calming them down and continuing the walk. "But sure... it's another long story like everything."

The four continued walking towards their home, while Tiny, Kiddy and Chunky continued to be curious with what Dixie had just revealed to them, or rather, with the whole journey in general... Being close to home, Dixie couldn't wait to tell them everything that had happened.

On another point of DK Island, there was an iconic tree house, which had a cave underneath with a banana reserve, and where the very Donkey Kong resided with his little nephew Diddy.

Later, Diddy and Donkey had arrived at the door of the house. Upon entering, Diddy kept jumping with excitement as he looked around, and felt a great joy of being home again; it was the last thing he needed to finish feeling at home again.

"I'm home! We're home, Donkey!" Diddy exclaimed, accompanied by screams of happiness.

"And it's all right here now that you're back, little buddy," Donkey said, looking at him happily.

"Ohh, I thought I was never going to come back!" Diddy said again, jumping with excitement.

"Come here, little buddy!" Donkey exclaimed, taking Diddy in the air and starting to tickle him like he hadn't done in a long time.

Donkey left Diddy on the floor again while he laughed. Then, Diddy went to his hanging tire, where he also missed so much getting on.

"Wow, everything looks the same as I saw it last time," Diddy said with a slight laugh.

"You couldn't imagine how empty the house felt without you," Donkey replied, smiling calmly. Then, he went to him and patted him on the shoulder. "And well, Diddy... are you ready to talk?"

"Uhh... yes, of course," Diddy replied with an insecure smile, but at the same time, trying to stay confident. "Oh... okay, Donkey, t-there's a lot I have to tell you."

Donkey stared at him for a few seconds, though this time smiling calmly. He wanted to let his little nephew know that he was willing to listen to him.

"Come, let's talk over here," Donkey said, extending his hand as a signal for Diddy to step down from the tire.

Donkey and Diddy headed to sit on the sofa; a place that usually was the best for having important conversations, as had happened before.

"Oh, Donkey... I guess now you already know," Diddy said, trying not to feel embarrassed. "But yeah, actually... I did have conflicts with those four kids at school," he revealed more sincerely this time. "And I was never able to tell you; they always threatened to hurt us if I reported them... And it turns out that was even absurd; they weren't going to do it, they just did it to scare me because I almost always believed things so easily."

"Okay, it's okay, little buddy," Donkey said, placing a hand on his shoulder and expressing confidence to speak. "The most important thing now is that you're here again. And well... you can't turn things back, but the alternative that now remains is to have learned. And yes, Diddy... I hope you did learn it, because I want you to know that... I'll always be there for you, to listen to you and help you in any situation. So... if you have any problems, *never* hesitate to tell me; as I have told you: you know that I'm like your father, like your older brother... like your friend."

Donkey caressed Diddy's head while smiling at him like a little child, and then Diddy looked up at him. Those gestures and those words made the little monkey feel his eyes moisten again, not so much with sadness or anything similar, but to remember everything that he went through and realize that he was back in his home with Donkey. Suddenly, Diddy just embraced Donkey, lunging towards him, and held on for a while.

"It's okay, don't worry," Donkey said, smiling calmly, before Diddy parted. "You can talk now, little buddy, whatever you want... And well, what happened?"

"Well... you know," Diddy pronounced, looking down at the floor. "Th-that last day I was here, I just went out at night because I felt really bad about everything that had happened. Don't think I escaped or anything, I just went for a ride on the sea and then I'd come back, but... the wind was really strong and I ended up going further towards the sea, and I even got lost. And later, those three circus men showed up, they had shot me with one of those sleep darts, and suddenly I woke up in that zoo."

"It can't be, did those men do you any harm?" Donkey exclaimed worriedly.

"No, or at least not then yet," Diddy replied. "I woke up all scared, but then I ran into other apes there and they told me that it wasn't a bad place, and so I still didn't understand why those men had taken me there. Oh... but believe me, that place was a prison; I'd have never gotten out of there if Dixie hadn't gone to find me."

"I see... I still remember the day she went searching for you; she didn't even want us to accompany her because she said it was something she had to sort out herself, we didn't quite understand why. In addition... it was there that she told us about those four kids who were your friends; she told us what they used to do to you, and that that kid, Jemky, the orangutan, had threatened her to stay away from you and hand them over your pyramid on the last day of school. And by the way... is it true that those kids carried *guns*?"

"Yes, yes, exactly that," Diddy replied, nodding. "And in fact, that's *just the beginning*; you won't believe everything that happened and what we found out later."

"Wow, that sounds like a really long story indeed," Donkey said, before pausing. "Hey, and... what about those kids? And to begin with... how did you fall out with them in the first place?"

"Well, it seems I'll have to tell you everything from the beginning," Diddy replied with a shrug. He was about to continue when a thought crossed his mind; he remembered *a curious piece of news* that he couldn't wait to share with Donkey as well. "Uh, hey, Donkey... It's that... I think before I start telling you everything, well... I also have *something important* to tell you."

"About what?" Donkey asked normally, as he still didn't seem to imagine what it was about.

"It's... Well, it's about Dixie," Diddy replied, looking away and intertwining his fingers while smiling shyly.

As expected, Donkey also made a reaction of having his curiosity activated upon hearing those words from Diddy.

"What do you mean?" Donkey exclaimed with a look of strangeness and at the same time of curiosity, before Diddy looked at him again with a smile, which made him think several things and even suppose a certain answer. "Wait!... That face of yours tells me something," he said, pointing at him with a somewhat suspicious look. "Is something... *going on*, Diddy?"

"Well... you could say so," Diddy replied, smiling and trying not to blush in order to answer. "Okay, okay... the thing is that..." he took a slight breath to say it while smiling. "Dixie and I are dating, Donkey."

Donkey, in the same way, widened his eyes to the fullest while smiling in amazement and instantly, as if he already expected Diddy to tell him something like that.

"R-really?!" Donkey exclaimed, taking Diddy by the shoulders in amazement. "I don't believe it, I don't believe you! Really?!"

"Yes, yes, of course it's true," Diddy replied with a few giggles as Donkey held him. "Yes, we are."

"Wow! I can't believe this!" Donkey exclaimed again, showing excitement once more. "And, and for how long? Just a few days ago or what?"

"Uh, no, we've been together for a while," Diddy replied, still with a few light laughs and blushing a little. "You see, we've been together for almost three months at first, but then... Oh, well, th-that's also part of this long story, many things happened, I'll tell you, but... yes, we're together now," he finished with a calmer smile.

"I can't believe it, little buddy," Donkey said, showing quite a bit of joy at that moment. "I'm going to be very happy for you, and for both of you. Uh, but things have been going well for both of you, right?"

"Well... it's also quite a long story as I told you. But at least at this moment, we've been doing well, and I hope it stays that way."

"Wow, wow, you sure have a lot to tell, little buddy," he said, smiling and raising his brows. "And by the way, did you finally manage to confess your feelings to her then?"

"Uhh, not exactly," Diddy replied with a shy smile and scratching his head. "I mean, I was able to do it, but it wasn't the first thing that happened."

"This sounds interesting," Donkey said, showing more curiosity. "Well, how did it all really go?"

"Okay, I'll tell you what happened. But first... let's go back to tell you how I fell out with those four kids..."

Donkey and Diddy continued their conversation about what Diddy had to tell. Among so many cheerful moments of the journey, as well as frustrating, sad, and even tragic ones, Diddy had to recap all the details to tell everything in order...

Chapter 101: Back Home

Diddy and Dixie, in their respective homes and to their respective relatives, recounted more details of everything they experienced during their unexpected journey. It took them a good while to tell everything: from Diddy's enmity with the Jemky's quartet, the dealings with Dixie, the threats from the quartet, Diddy's kidnapping by the tamers, what they saw at that circus, the animal escape, the shipwreck on Hurricane Island, the unexpected reunion with the animals and Mr. Pinky, the beginning of the romance between Diddy and Dixie, their false friendship with Jenny's quartet, the construction of the ship, the breakup of Diddy and Dixie, to the discovery of the islet with the hidden building, the reunion with Jemky's quartet and the apes, the discovery of their evil plans, the constant confrontations, the unexpected reunion with the tamers, the rescue of the herd of children, the confrontation on the ship in the middle of the storm, the confrontation on the plane, the defeat of the tamers, the days in that hospital, the final moments with Jemky's quartet and their stories, the return to Hurricane Island, the rescue of Mr. Pinky and the kong children, the reconciliation of Diddy and Dixie, and finally the arrival at DK Island.

With everything they recounted, both Dixie's family and Donkey were extremely astonished, especially by the twists and turns of the story. They saw that Diddy and Dixie were not wrong in saying that they had a lot to tell.

On her part, Dixie was on the sofa at home with Chunky, Tiny and Kiddy, who were sitting on the floor or on the edge of the sofa so they could listen to her. The news she had shared had been quite interesting to them, as none of them had expected to hear that Dixie had been near the group of apes and the tamers again. Even more surprising was that they had been allied all along, and even worse, that the four bully kids from school were the adopted children of those apes. They never expected that they could have been so close to them, and that perhaps Diddy and Dixie had prevented greater misfortunes in the future because of their adventure.

"So... it's all over," Tiny said, looking down at the floor as she looked pensive after listening to Dixie. "We're not going to be in any danger anymore..."

"At least from those apes and even those tamers... no," Dixie replied serenely.

"No, no, no, Chunky doesn't know what to think now," Chunky said, shaking his head side to side with his hands on his temple.

Tiny and Chunky had teary eyes, partly from sadness at remembering their situation, but also from the amazement and reassurance of knowing that a settling score had been made for everything those evil ones did to their families. Dixie, although she could already keep herself a little calmer talking about the topic, also had her eyes a little moistened to see her sister and cousins just processing the situation. Kiddy, on his part, only listened to everything, since upon being still an infant, he did not understand clearly what had happened.

"Then that's why those monstrous hunters wanted to take us away that time," Tiny added, before raising her voice a little. "And why did Mom and Dad never tell us anything?!"

"I guess it was to not scare us and try to protect us," Dixie replied. "I didn't understand it at first either."

"So... was it already something that could happen?" Tiny added with a tone of sadness. "Had those monstrous ones always wanted to catch us? Urgh, I hope they really rot in prison!"

"In fact, they're already rotten," Dixie reaffirmed. "The people said they can't even get up anymore... and that they won't even live that long. And regarding the apes, well... it might reassure me that they're no longer in this world, although... I don't know what to think about their history with those tamers either."

"Hey, but seriously... it's all incredible," Chunky said again, in amazement. "Diddy and you were able to defeat all those monsters, and even saved many more animals. You'd have taken us with you! Chunky would have liked to give them a comeuppance too... Or wait, I wouldn't know how to do it if they carried guns."

"It's true, we'd have gone with you," Tiny added. "I'd have wanted to fight all those monstrous ones too."

"Hey, no, what are you saying?" Dixie exclaimed, shaking her head and hands. "You seriously wouldn't have wanted to be there; it was all very dangerous."

"Hey, and by the way..." Tiny said, showing some concern. "Did you also seriously... almost depart this world, Dixie?... And did you see our parents and Kiddy and Chunky's parents?!"

"Yes... I certainly saw them," Dixie replied, lowering her gaze, but with a slight smile. "I saw them clearly... And I talked to them, as I just told you."

"Wow... I'd also like to have a dream like that," Tiny commented, looking sad again. "I have also seen them in my dreams, but... not as close as you just had, I'd also like to see them that close."

"Don't worry, little sister," Dixie said, smiling at her and placing a hand on her shoulder. "Anyway... they told me about you too; they said that we'll always be their greatest treasures, and that from wherever they are... they'll always be with us. And well... they'll be resting much better now that there has been justice for them and for everything we had to go through, and the truth... that won't bring them back or solve our lives, but... it's what could serve us as consolation."

The four of them remained silent for a few seconds while having some serious expressions. Suddenly, Tiny just climbed on the sofa and lay beside Dixie, who then hugged her for a while, before also hugging Kiddy, who continued to watch and listen to the scene with an innocent gaze. Chunky also joined in to hug the three of them as in a family moment. Then, Dixie continued speaking to them, and they parted a little.

"Hey, and..." Dixie said, smiling a little again and looking at each of them. "I just want to tell you that... we always stay united, as our parents told us. Even if one day we are going to go our separate ways... let's never stop being united and supporting each other as much as we can. You three... are all I have, and you don't know how much I wish you could be okay and we could move on. Our parents told me that... even if something tries to take away our happiness, always find reasons to keep going, and... you're one of those reasons, actually the biggest ones."

Both Tiny and Chunky, and even Kiddy looked up at Dixie, while she smiled even more at them as she thought about how lucky she felt to be with them again.

"We're... the only ones left in our family," Tiny said, looking down, though this time being calmer. Then, she looked back at Dixie. "I feel the same way, sis... I want us to always stay together too, no

matter if we have to separate at some point.”

"Chunky says the same thing too," Chunky added, smiling again. "We're still a family, and Chunky loves you all very much."

"Hug!" Kiddy exclaimed, looking happy too and hugging Dixie.

"Me too... and you don't know how happy I'm to see you again," Dixie told them, smiling at each one and making some affectionate gestures. But suddenly, she lowered her gaze again. "Oh, and also... I really want to apologize... if I worried you so much and left you for these three months; I never thought it'd all turn out like this."

"Hey, no, Dixie," Tiny said with a small smile. "I mean... we were so worried about you that we couldn't even be okay, but... in the end, throughout that journey, you managed to do a lot for us four: you and Diddy defeated all those monsters, and who knows... you might even have saved us from meeting them again, and that... I think that's going to make me a little calmer from now on."

"Yeah, it seems that it wasn't all in vain, after all," Chunky added in the same way. "You and Diddy really did something huge for us... Even for many other families."

"You saved all those animals, even other children," Tiny added. "And the best part... is that you made those monstrous hunter tamers pay; they were the real masterminds in that matter. You two were heroes."

"Well... we just did what we could," Dixie replied, smiling back a little.

The four embraced each other again with so much brotherly affection that they seemed like a happy family again, as much as possible. Upon parting, Dixie looked at each of the three, thinking about everything she had to go through.

"And by the way... so, now you and Diddy are a couple, right?" Chunky said after a while, raising his brows.

"Ohh, how cute," Tiny said, giving Dixie a slight tickle. "See, you two managed to be together after all."

"Well, that happened too," Dixie replied with a few small laughs, starting to blush a little, before calming down. "And yes... I'm also very happy about that; Diddy and I managed to work things out."

"Imagine when you both grow up and get married," Tiny said, showing some excitement towards Dixie.

"Wow, that would call for a big celebration," Chunky added in the same way. "We'll be your first guests!"

"Hey, wait, calm down," Dixie told them, laughing a little and trying to calm them. "We're just starting our relationship... We have a lot ahead of us, and it's true what Mr. Pinky told us:... we both are still just kids; we still have so much to experience."

"But do you think about being together forever?" Tiny asked again with an innocent smile.

"Tiny, time will tell," Dixie replied, smiling calmly and looking at the floor. "Of course, I'd like that. And... actually, I'll never know for sure if he's thinking the same way, but at least I want to do my best to make it happen."

Tiny looked at her with a bit of strangeness, and Dixie let out a small laugh.

"Yeah, I made the same face when the teacher gave us that speech," Dixie commented. "But... I think it's true; it'll depend on both of us to make it happen and do things right... And this time, I want to do things right."

"Hey, by the way... I'm getting hungry," Chunky said, rubbing his stomach. "How about we go get some bananas?"

"You're right, let's go!" Tiny added, grabbing Dixie's arm. "Come on, Dixie!"

"Alright, okay," Dixie replied, smiling. "I'm hungry too."

The four of them got up and headed outside the house. They closed the door and then walked towards some banana trees planted near their home. Dixie felt better than ever being able to share moments with her family again; she felt so grateful that she had managed to come back.

Meanwhile, Diddy had also finished telling and explaining everything to Donkey. Just like Dixie's family, Donkey was utterly shocked by everything Diddy told him; he couldn't believe the adventure that Diddy and Dixie had been involved in. Similarly, Donkey was astonished by everything Diddy had shared about his four former schoolmates, from the context of them being evil kids to explaining that they were also abandoned children. Diddy had told Donkey everything with a lot of confidence, not hesitating at all this time.

"So, after all... there wasn't a child thief as we thought," Donkey said, sitting on the sofa next to Diddy, after he had finished recounting everything. "That is, those apes did steal children, but it was by order of those tamers... And actually... the boy found in the river was Jemky, and it was Dixie who had attacked him in defense... No wonder she was acting quite strange when we mentioned that topic."

"And that's why we were afraid to meet them when we got back here," Diddy added. "Not knowing that all the time they had been watching us through those other mechanized children."

"Even those apes; I mean... we practically also had them nearby, since they were the adoptive parents of those kids... Geez, I don't know what to think now, seriously."

"If I had told you before, I don't know how things would have turned out," Diddy said before heaving a sigh. "Oh, but I know... the right thing to do in a situation like this was to tell you, Donkey; we could have avoided so many arguments, even with Dixie; I argued with her when we arrived at Hurricane Island when she told me she had told you all... I really don't know why I let my fears get the better of me and used to believe everything those four kids told us or did to us."

"It's okay, Diddy," Donkey said, placing a hand on his head, "the important thing is that you have reflected on it. And don't punish yourself anymore for it... I understand now that you were too scared to tell me. And well... it seems we just need to focus on the good things that came out of

this; I mean... Dixie and you defeated those dangerous tamers, stopped their evil plans in their tracks, and that... really left me amazed, little buddy... You brought justice for Dixie's family and many other animals."

"I know... that's also what reassures me a lot," Diddy replied again, smiling a little. "I have seen Dixie, and even the other three, feel very bad when talking about what happened to them, and... it truly makes me happy that something significant could be done for them. And I hope they can be more at peace from now on."

"Me too... You two dismantled that entire sinister criminal organization," Donkey added in the same way, before lowering his gaze and sighing. "Although, the ones I did feel a bit sorry for were those four kids; they were really going down a bad path, but it wasn't their fault they grew up in those conditions."

"Believe me, we didn't know what else to think about them," Diddy added earnestly. "And they were very evil kids; Dixie and I were quite annoyed with them, but also... they were just looking for refuge, looking for ways to feel good... and they didn't understand that hurting others, or even themselves, wasn't the solution."

"Not to mention the other four children who had been mechanized; those tamers were monstrous, even they themselves made those mandrills and orangutans so evil... Oh, and just in time you both managed to rescue that other herd of children, Mr. Pinky and those circus animals, because otherwise, they'd have fallen into a terrible fate too."

"I really wouldn't want to imagine it; even Dixie and I would have fallen... And well, we can only hope that all of them can be well, especially all those children; we were told that most of them lived in bad situations with their families..." Diddy paused a little, before sighing again. "Oh, all this really makes me think that many of us haven't had much luck coming into this world and growing up amidst difficulties."

"Oh... I don't blame you, little buddy," Donkey said, looking at him seriously. "Because I know what it's like to grow up like that too... without a complete family and left adrift and exposed to so many risks... like when my parents departed this world and your father and I were left alone. Although... we weren't entirely lost anyway; Cranky and Wrinkly were able to take care of us within their possibilities."

"I know... just like it happened to me too," Diddy added, lowering his gaze. "Like when you told me that... my parents were gone."

"I still remember it and believe me... it was terrible," he said before caressing Diddy's head and looking at him with deep melancholy. "I can't blame you if you were afraid to say something. I... remember I was also very scared to tell you what happened to your parents; I didn't want to worry you or make you feel bad. I still remember... when you asked about them when you were so little, until I knew I couldn't keep lying to you, and... believe me, it was painful to tell you; if it was already painful enough to see your parents depart, it was even worse having to tell you and explain why they weren't coming back... And at least we managed to settle scores with those darn kremlings who did it."

Diddy just let a few tears fall from his eyes, wiping them away even as more began to flow.

"I remember it too, Donkey," he replied with a breaking voice, looking up with teary eyes. "And I understand... you were just trying to keep me from feeling bad too."

"I never wanted to see you hurt... but I had to tell you that time anyway," Donkey added, still caressing Diddy's head like he was a baby.

Suddenly, Diddy lowered his gaze again as more tears flowed from his eyes. Then, he threw himself into Donkey's arms, clinging to him again, remembering that, after all, he still had him. Donkey also hugged him like a father would his young son, for a while. Later, Diddy parted from the hug, with his eyes still moistened.

"Donkey..." he said, looking up and smiling a little. "But still... I feel lucky to have you... You're the only one I have, you are and have always been like a father, a friend... a brother," he finished, smiling more.

"Oh, Diddy," Donkey said, smiling at him like a little child. "And I feel so lucky to have you too, and even more so that you're safe and well; I always want to see you happy. And you know... as far as I can, I'm here for you; you can always count on me, even if you decide to take a new path someday."

Diddy smiled at Donkey, and then gave him a sudden but affectionate hug again. Without a doubt, and after remembering everything he had seen in his journey, he felt luckier than ever knowing he still had someone to be there for him, someone who provided him refuge, love, and unconditional support like Donkey did. Later, they parted, while Donkey kept patting his head, before tickling him lightly.

"And by the way, Diddy... So, you and Dixie are together now, huh?" he mentioned after a while, raising his brows.

"Oh, well, yes, of course," he replied, blushing a little and scratching his head. "Yes, we are."

"Oh, you can tell how excited you are," Donkey said, tickling him more as Diddy giggled. Afterwards, Donkey stopped and spoke to him more calmly. "And well, little buddy, I'm really happy for you two; you deserve to be happy. Though you know... taking care of a relationship isn't easy; what Mr. Pinky said it's true."

"I know... And I see that it may be true," Diddy replied with a small smile. "Just with some things that happened to us, we've realized, even some things you told me: not everything will go as we expect."

"That's right, little buddy," Donkey replied, putting a hand on his shoulder and smiling at him. "And you know, for any doubts or help you need, I'm here for you, even for both of you if Dixie needs it too. And seriously, I hope you two can go far together."

"Thanks, Donkey," Diddy replied, smiling back before sighing. "And I really hope to go far with Dixie too; you don't know how happy I've been for her as well."

Donkey gave Diddy one last hug accompanied by a few light pats on the head. He was undoubtedly very happy to see his little nephew the same way.

"And well, Diddy," he said after a while. "Would you like to do something fun now that you're back? After you rest a bit, of course."

"Of course, Donkey," Diddy replied, getting up from the sofa.

"So, how about we make your favorite cookies? And then we'll play on the gaming console."

Diddy nodded with a few small jumps of excitement. He had never felt so at home as he did at that moment, and he was happy to be back, enjoying peaceful moments with Donkey. However, as Donkey guessed, he went to rest first, as he was obviously exhausted. Later, he would return to have some fun moments at home with Donkey.

Chapter 102: Family Reunion

That same day, Diddy and Dixie finally rested in their respective homes; although they hadn't rested so badly when they were on Hurricane Island, now in their own homes they felt at their best, without further worries.

In the afternoon, Candy and Funky had gone to visit Donkey and Diddy to know more about what had happened, even Cranky and Wrinkly went later to ask them how everything had been. This time, Diddy recounted it more calmly and faster. The Kong family were shocked to hear everything that happened. Wrinkly, especially, had been shocked when knew about the children in Jemky's quartet; she never imagined everything those children lived and did, and she was even very sad to know that she could not help them or Diddy in that situation either. Even so, everything had already happened, and Diddy only had to recognize the consequences of not having reported it in time.

The kongs from the family who had gone to visit Donkey's house stayed until nightfall, keeping them company until it got quite late. Even during the daytime hours, they were visited by Lanky and Swanky as well. Later, they also visited Dixie and her group to see how they were doing. Diddy and Dixie met again... while both Dixie's family and Donkey watched them with a certain curiosity, already knowing about their relationship. However, to avoid pressuring them, they tried not to bring up the topic for the time being, while Diddy and Dixie tried to remain discreet.

During the late hours of the night, they were all already at home resting, and Diddy and Dixie could not be better than ever enjoying a few decent hours of sleep. The next day, they were also able to wake up peacefully.

During the day, the Kong family reunited at various times. As expected, some other apes residing on DK Island had also heard about the return of Diddy and Dixie. Those who were closer to the family asked about what had happened, and they explained everything, though in a more superficial and summarized way.

That evening, the Kong family planned to have a small celebration for Diddy and Dixie's return. They decided to keep it just among the twelve kongs, simply to share the moment. Both Diddy and Dixie, as well as the rest of the kongs, could not have been more excited to have a gathering of the whole group, something they hadn't done in a long time.

This time, the celebration was held near Funky's house, with all the usual arrangements and preparations, as well as an extensive feast prepared by some family members.

Donkey and Diddy arrived at the place, where the others were already waiting for them. Almost at the same time, Dixie and her family also arrived and met up with Donkey and Diddy.

"Hi, little buddies! How is it going?" Donkey greeted the four of them along with Diddy.

"Hi, Donkey! Hi, Diddy!" answered each of them in the same cheerful way.

"Ah, it's about time we were all together again," Donkey said, smiling at everyone.

"Yeah, and much better now that Diddy and Dixie are here," Tiny added in the same way.

They all were very happy, and then they gave each other a few hugs, being Diddy and Dixie who gave each other a somewhat longer hug than the others... earning a few curious looks from the others, so both tried to act normally when parted, while smiling and blushing with a little shyness upon being in front of their families.

"Well, what are we waiting for?" Donkey said, trying not to laugh and disguise the situation. "Let's go where everyone is."

The six kongs continued to walk towards the celebration area. But on the way, Diddy and Dixie began to gesture and whisper certain words to each other, while pointing their eyes at the other kongs.

"Tell them first," Diddy whispered with a few small laughs.

"No, you say it," Dixie replied in the same way, giving him a light nudge.

"Donkey already knows anyway," Diddy added, trying not to laugh any louder due to shyness.

"And Tiny, Kiddy and Chunky too," Dixie replied with a shrug and the same expression.

"Knowing *what*?" Donkey asked, looking sideways at them and hearing them whisper anyway.

Tiny, Kiddy, and Chunky turned to look at them quite curiously too, making Diddy and Dixie smile at everyone with some shyness. But then, they spoke to them again normally.

"Uhh, well, you surely already know," Diddy told them, still with a slight laugh, "that the two of us..."

"... are a couple," Dixie finished the sentence, with a few small giggles too.

"Oh, we already knew that!" Tiny said, giving the two of them a little push and laughing too.

"Yeah, I knew too, don't worry," Donkey added in the same way. "Besides, you had been a couple for some time, right?" he added, also giving them a little push.

"Well, yes," Diddy replied, blushing and giggling a little along with Dixie.

"Diddy and Dixie are dating now!" Chunky exclaimed, also giving them a few little pushes in a playful way.

"And we're happy for you, little buddies," Donkey said, smiling more calmly. "You just have to know one thing: always know how to handle it responsibly. And well, we're here for you; I'll support you."

Diddy and Dixie smiled back at them, before the others made other happy gestures towards the two of them. While they were somewhat shy about bringing it up with their two families together, they could not wait to talk about it either.

Then, everyone went to reunite with the rest of the Kong family. In the same way, they greeted each other excited to be reunited all complete. The others already knew something about Diddy and Dixie's relationship as well, so they looked at them with the same curiosity.

"Hi, friends!" Funky greeted the six newly arrived kongs.

The kongs also greeted Funky with the same energy, as did the other kongs, who were already present at the venue. Suddenly, Funky and Lanky approached Diddy and Dixie stealthily.

"I've already been told about the two of you, huh?" Funky whispered to them in a mischievous tone. "Is that true?"

"But how curious you are," Diddy replied in a mocking tone, before laughing a little along with Dixie. "Yes, it's true."

"Oh, how cute," Lanky said in a playful tone. "I congratulate you both."

Diddy and Dixie looked at each other and gave another light laugh, before thanking the others. Then, everyone came to gather in the herd to start the celebration.

The exterior of Funky's house, the place of the celebration, had many jungle arrangements, in addition to a few lights that illuminated the area. Funky, Lanky, and Swanky were finishing inspecting that the preparations were all complete; Cranky and Wrinkly were also with the three of them, although Cranky was a headache criticizing the arrangements, but Donkey and Candy were there to calm him down. Chunky also helped them with the arrangements that required someone taller, and in another area, Tiny and Kiddy were playing.

Finally, Diddy and Dixie were in another corner together. They were sitting on some rocks, watching what the other kongs were doing, and laughing at Cranky's arguments. But aside from everything, they both felt so good to be like that again... on DK Island and with the Kong family reunited.

"Ahh, we're finally home, Dix," Diddy said, breathing a sigh of tranquility.

"I'm still excited to know we made it," Dixie replied, smiling as she continued to look up at the scene. "After all we had to go through."

"Did you sleep well last night, by the way?" Diddy asked. "You can't imagine how well I finally rested in my house."

"It was the best," Dixie replied. "I was finally able to sleep without having to worry about whether or not we'll arrive at DK Island or if someone will come to catch us... And well, the only thing is that I also missed you a little, Diddy" she added with a tone of shyness.

"Oh... I know... we're not going to meet every day anymore," Diddy replied, blushing and emitting a slight laugh. "Although anyway, we'll meet at school or when we meet with the others, or even when we both go on a date from time to time."

"So, we're going to meet anyway," Dixie replied in kind, before giving him a kiss on the cheek... but then looking everywhere to make sure no one has seen those loving gestures. Afterwards, the two laughed quietly and blushing a little.

Both then settled into an embrace, while also looking into each other's eyes and smiling. Suddenly, in the distance they caught sight of a curious scene: it was Donkey and Candy together, who had also moved away a little, just the two of them, and began to give hugs or loving gestures, accompanied by extremely loving words that became almost poetic. Diddy and Dixie were watching the scene, and then the two looked at each other without being able to help laughing in a low voice.

"Hey, Diddy," Dixie said, finishing laughing. "And do you remember when you used to make fun of the two of them?" she added with a mocking smile, giving him a little push. "Now what?"

"Oh, why do you remind me of that?" Diddy replied, pushing back with a little laugh as well. "I mean... you know that it doesn't work for me being as 'romantic' as them, but you also know that I love you anyway."

"Ah, but don't act crazy; sometimes it does work for you when we're alone," Dixie said, smiling and tickling him slightly.

"Hey, but not *like that either*," Diddy replied, laughing and trying to dodge her, while blushing a little.

"Oh, you look so cute," Dixie said, taking his face in a playful way.

"*Dixie*," he replied, trying to get serious, but the increase in his blush didn't cooperate.

Then, Diddy couldn't help but smile at her again, and just hugged her and kissed her cheek back quickly. The two stayed a while closer together, looking towards the other kongs in the distance.

"Ohh, how cute," a different voice exclaimed suddenly.

Diddy and Dixie opened their eyes to the fullest when they heard that sudden, childish voice. It was nobody but Tiny, accompanied by Kiddy.

"Tiny!" Dixie exclaimed, looking at her and Kiddy with some embarrassment. "But what were you doing around here?"

"Well... I just wanted to see you two," Tiny replied with a playful tone and looking at them sideways, before laughing. "I see that you two love each other so much."

"Hey, were you spying on us?!" Dixie replied, staring at her, hands at her sides.

"No, of course not," Tiny replied with the same laughter. "We just hid with Kiddy to watch you from afar."

"Then you were spying on us!" Diddy pointed at them, staring at them too.

"I saw them unintentionally, it wasn't our intention," Tiny added in the same playful tone. "But you look so cute together," she told them in a tender tone, before taking their heads by surprise and trying to bring them together. "Let's see. Give a kiss."

"Hey, Tiny, we don't do that in public," Dixie replied, pushing her away, before laughing with Diddy.

"Oh, how lazy you two are," Tiny said, crossing her arms, before giving them a playful look. "But I'll see you doing it later."

"*Tiny*," Dixie said, staring at her again, hands at her sides.

"Hey, friends!" another sudden voice exclaimed.

The four of them turned to look and saw that it was Funky and Swanky, who were heading towards them.

"We're going to start, come here!" Swanky announced.

Both Diddy and Dixie, as well as Tiny and Kiddy were excited, and hurried to join the other kongs and then go to get the whole family together.

"Come, friends, let's start to play!" Donkey told them as they all got together.

"Yeah!" the smaller kongs exclaimed, looking excited.

Funky, Swanky and Lanky had also prepared a competitive play area, similar to how they did when the Kong family had special gatherings. The most prominent game was always target shooting, in which everyone took turns several times to play.

"I'll play the first round!" Diddy exclaimed, rushing to grab a game piece to throw.

"Me too!" Dixie added in the same way.

"No, no, me too!" Tiny hurried, interjected among them all.

"No, Chunky got here first!" Chunky added, pushing them.

"Let's see, move aside, I'll beat you all at this!" Cranky intervened, elbowing his way in.

"Ohhh, Mr. know-it-all has begun!" Donkey exclaimed in a mocking tone towards Cranky.

"Silence, boy!" Cranky retorted, pointing at Donkey with the cane while he laughed.

"Okay, okay, everyone's going to play!" Swanky interrupted, joining in to calm them down.

"Besides, you all know that in the first round, everyone gets to play until they're eliminated from the game."

As it often happened during playtime, the kongs would get excited when engaging in competitions among themselves, obviously in a friendly manner. Nearly the entire family stayed to play for quite some time, some becoming frustrated while others made victorious gestures throughout the game. Undoubtedly, these were moments of fun that the family needed and hadn't experienced in a long time.

Later, almost everyone was exhausted from playing, so they decided to take a break. At the same time, they were feeling hungry, so Lanky and Funky, who usually took care of that, went to prepare the food to distribute it.

While the kongs were scattered around, Diddy was gathered with Dixie and company, chatting, as hadn't happened in a while. They already missed being together again, sharing a moment.

"Dinner is almost ready, friends!" Lanky exclaimed, calling them all in the distance.

Everyone in the Kong family started heading back to the table where they were going to meet for dinner. Among the young kongs, Tiny, Kiddy, and Chunky ran to the table, while Diddy and Dixie decided to take a little time before meeting. When suddenly, they both felt like they were called on the way.

"Diddy! Dixie!" Wrinkly called them suddenly.

"Yeah?" Diddy and Dixie replied, turning to look.

Wrinkly walked towards them, carrying some sheets of paper, as Diddy and Dixie were expecting her to inform them about Kong Kollege, since recently they had asked her about it.

"Hey, children," Wrinkly said, stopping in front of them. "I was going to talk to you about the new school year, which actually started a couple of weeks ago."

"It's true, will we go tomorrow?" Diddy asked.

"No, no, not yet," Wrinkly replied, smiling at them. "I wanted to let you know that you two will be starting the following week; I think it's best for you to rest for the remainder of this week. You deserve it."

"Oh, okay, Mrs. Wrinkly," Dixie replied, cheerful along with Diddy. "Uhh, but... we won't be late, will we?"

"Oh, no, don't worry about that," Wrinkly reassured them, calming their concerns. "I'll catch you up as soon as you return to class. Besides, it's barely the third week of the school year. You'll even meet some new classmates who have joined."

"New... classmates, you said?" Diddy asked, with a slight look of puzzlement. "But really new ones?"

"Yes, about seven new children have joined," Wrinkly replied with a smile, before noticing some doubts in Diddy and Dixie. "Oh, don't worry, those little ones seem perfectly normal, even their parents who came to enroll them, so don't worry about them either... They don't seem to be like what you told me Jemky, Mandrew, Melenky and Rocky were like," Wrinkly added before sighing and lowering her gaze. "Heavens, they were really evil kids, although... I truly felt sorry for them and what they had to live through."

"Yeah... we know," Dixie replied in the same way along with Diddy. "And nothing could be done for them."

"It really was a difficult situation the last time we saw them," Diddy added. "And also everything they told us about their lives."

"Yeah... they were just practically abandoned creatures," Wrinkly added, shrugging her shoulders and moving her head side to side, sighing. "I really wish I had known all that earlier. And by the way, precisely about this topic I wanted to talk to you. You see... we're going to implement new disciplines at school, and they will be focused on helping any child who has any problem, even with their own classmates."

"New disciplines?" Diddy asked, looking somewhat confused. "You mean, new subjects?"

"Yes, exactly. Although don't worry, it will only be occasionally and there won't be any extra homework about it; it's just for the purpose of helping."

"Wow, that sounds like a great idea, Mrs. Wrinkly," Dixie replied, smiling as did Diddy. "Because that really wouldn't be bad at all."

"Yeah, ever since I was told about those four children when we found out you two were missing, I decided to do this at the start of the school year, and now with everything you've told me, I have even more reason to do so. In fact, in the documents you brought me, there was a confirmation. Even new teachers will come when it's time for you to take those subjects," she added, showing them a little the sheets she was carrying, which appeared to be the ones from the box sent by Mr. Pinky.

"Really?" Diddy exclaimed immediately. "And just in case... will Mr. Pinky come back for that?" he added, smiling along with Dixie.

"Oh, no, he won't come, he won't be one of them," Wrinkly replied with a little laugh. "He just came here as a substitute teacher; he has his own school on another island. Although at some point he may be asked again."

"He should; he'd be a good teacher at that," Dixie added.

"Who knows, maybe next time," Wrinkly replied, still smiling at them, before speaking seriously. "And well, kids, that's what I wanted to tell you. And one more thing, you know: always, *whenever* you need something, I'll be here to listen to you. If you ever have or see any problems with other children, *never* hesitate to let me know. If someone tries to harm you, tell me with complete confidence; even if they threaten to harm us or destroy the island, let me know."

"Of course we will," Diddy replied, this time smiling more confidently along with Dixie. "After all, it was true... it's not good to keep the bad things to yourself and not ask for help when you need it."

"Yeah, don't worry, Mrs. Wrinkly," Dixie added. "We'll count on you."

"That's right, my little ones," Wrinkly exclaimed, smiling at them more calmly and adjusting her papers.

"Hey, Wrinkly, what are you waiting for?" an additional voice said, which belonged to Cranky, who appeared on the way. "Let's have dinner."

"Oh, yes, yes, I was informing the kids," Wrinkly replied, pointing to Diddy and Dixie. "Let's go, it's time for dinner."

Wrinkly and Cranky began walking to the table with the Kong family, but not before Diddy and Dixie stopped them once again.

"Hey, and by the way," Diddy said before pointing to the papers Wrinkly was carrying. "And why were those papers sent to Cranky too? Will he be a teacher too?"

Suddenly, Wrinkly and Cranky looked at each other changing their expressions, but then answered them back as if nothing, which for Diddy and Dixie was somewhat strange.

"Uhh, not exactly," Wrinkly replied, smiling at them. "They only made a small mention of him."

"It's nothing important, guys, you won't understand," Cranky added, shrugging, before continuing to walk. "Okay, let's go to dinner."

Diddy and Dixie stood still and somewhat confused with the answer, but then simply shrugged and downplayed it. Afterward, they both started running to where the rest of the Kong family was to

have dinner with them.

On their part, Cranky and Wrinkly continued walking. When suddenly... the two stopped for a moment and looked at each other with sudden seriousness. Then, Wrinkly glanced at the papers she was carrying, from which she took out a particular sheet, and both she and Cranky stared at it. They glanced at each other again, while Cranky gave Wrinkly a small hug before continuing to look at the paper. The sheet seemed to be a letter with a long text, and on the other side was a drawing of what appeared to be apes: two adults and two babies. The drawing seemed to depict a *family of kongs*, where there was a couple of gorillas with two twin babies, both dressed in white clothes with a "J" on them: one of the babies had brown fur, while the other... had a curious *pink fur*.

Later, the Kong family was already at the table enjoying dinner. They also missed being able to share moments like that with everyone together. They missed being able to talk, recount, or remember an event or anecdote. This time, and as expected, Diddy and Dixie's journey and the moments the Kong family experienced during their absence were the main topics of conversation, which they couldn't stop commenting on. At times, the topic of the love bond between Diddy and Dixie was also mentioned, which made the two a little shy to reply about it. Nevertheless, both little kongs were happy to be with the rest of the kongs; every moment they spent with them again made them more excited than ever.

"What if we play another round after this?" Funky proposed in reference to the games, when they were finishing eating.

Some of the family responded excitedly, as each was finishing dinner. Then, they got up from their seats and picked up their own things. At one point, Dixie was leaving her tray of food on the pickup table, when suddenly, someone called her almost whispering.

"Hey, Dixie," Donkey's voice was heard quietly.

"Yeah?" she replied, turning to look.

Donkey looked around with some stealth, and then took out a small box covered in pink glitter and a red ribbon.

"I think this is yours," Donkey said, handing her the tiny box in her hands.

Dixie gave a look of strangeness at the box, which was smaller than her hand, when suddenly... she recognized it clearly, and even felt some embarrassment that Donkey was the one who handed it to her: it was that box she had made when she was frustratedly planning to confess her feelings to Diddy.

"But how?" Dixie exclaimed, not knowing what to say as she opened the box and pulled out the note she had written there. "W-where-"

"I found it when we were searching for Diddy," Donkey told her, before patting her on the head with a smile. "I guess you wanted to give it to him, so... you can do it now that you two have returned."

Dixie just blushed a little embarrassed after knowing that Donkey had seen that for a long time, although he already knew about her bond with Diddy anyway.

"Uhh, okay... Thank you, Donkey," Dixie replied, smiling somewhat shyly.

"I'm sure Diddy would have been excited about that," Donkey replied with a little laugh. "And don't worry, I didn't show it to Diddy, so you can still give it to him."

Then, Donkey withdrew and joined the other kongs. Meanwhile, Dixie re-read the note in the box, where she confessed her feelings to Diddy for real. She just gave a few small laughs with some embarrassment upon recalling, but even so, she considered showing it to Diddy at some point. Afterwards, she just returned to meet with the others to continue the celebration.

"Come! Let's start a new round!" Swanky exclaimed, calling them.

During the rest of the celebration, the Kong family spent their time having fun, both with their competitive games and also chatting in a group with everyone together. The peace they felt from having such a moment was unique that night.

Epilogue: A Return and a Date

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

"Is everything set, little buddy?" Donkey asked Diddy.

"All set!" Diddy exclaimed, making a gesture of positive affirmation.

Donkey and Diddy, standing by the door of their house, high-fived each other excitedly before Donkey playfully patted Diddy's head. Then, Diddy opened the door and stepped outside with his backpack on... It was his first day of the new school year. Suddenly, he looked down the path and remembered his previous two school years, especially the last one, and so many thoughts came to his mind. Then, Donkey approached him and put a hand on his shoulder.

"Well, Diddy... it's time," Donkey said, smiling at him, while Diddy looked at him a little seriously. "And don't worry, little buddy. You already know, if you have any problems and need help, don't hesitate to tell me or Wrinkly; we'll be here for you and Dixie. And don't stop taking care of each other and staying safe."

"Okay, Donkey," Diddy replied, nodding and smiling again.

"That's my boy," Donkey exclaimed, hugging him and patting his head gently. "Now go, don't be late."

Diddy said goodbye to Donkey once more before proceeding to climb down from the treehouse. He waved goodbye to Donkey from a distance, and then started walking toward Kong Kollege. The mere thought of returning to school made him a bit nervous, but he no longer felt the fear he had in previous school years. He felt like he hadn't been as confident in going to that place as he was at that moment, after so long.

On another point of DK Island, another family of kongs was getting out of their home, especially someone who had also been preparing to go to Kong Kollege. It was Dixie and her family.

"So, you're going to leave again, Dixie," Tiny said, patting her on the shoulder. "Do you feel ready?"

"Yeah... it's all right," Dixie replied calmly and smiling at the three of them.

"And you already know," Chunky said, clenching his fists with a determined look. "If there are evil children again, you'll let us know if we have to give them their comeuppance... Or well, first let Wrinkly know in case they're like those kids," he added, switching to a more nervous tone.

"Don't worry, I hope it's not like that anymore," Dixie replied with a small smile. "This time, we won't want to allow something like that again... And well, it's time for me to go."

"Take care, Dixie," Tiny said before hugging her along with Chunky, and Kiddy joined in afterwards. "And I know you'll be with Diddy now," she added, whispering in a playful tone.

Dixie just giggled before saying goodbye one last time to her sister and cousins. Afterwards, she started walking towards Kong Kollege, carrying her new backpack on her back.

Even though Dixie also had many thoughts about returning to school, she felt calmer this time.

Meanwhile, Diddy was arriving at Kong Kollege. As he approached, several memories of when he used to fear going to school came to mind. The atmosphere even felt a bit unusual as he no longer felt any fear being there.

On the other hand, Dixie was also reaching the meeting area. Suddenly, she spotted Diddy in the distance, who had already arrived.

“Diddy!” she called out before starting to run towards him.

Diddy heard Dixie clearly and then turned to look at her from a distance, before running towards her as well.

“Dixie!”

Both kongs ran towards each other and, upon meeting, hugged and greeted each other with excitement, happy to see each other again on a normal day like before, though this time much better.

“Are you ready to start?” Dixie asked as they parted.

“All ready,” Diddy exclaimed with a positive gesture. “And you?”

“Of course,” Dixie replied in the same way, then looked towards Kong Kollege in the distance. “And we’re finally back completely,” she added, smiling.

“So... let’s see what this new school year has for us,” Diddy added, smiling calmly as he also looked towards the school. “Let’s go!” he exclaimed before starting to walk.

Diddy and Dixie continued heading towards Kong Kollege. Despite having some doubts, they were also curious about the new things that might come with the new school year. When they reached the school’s recreation area, they stopped to watch the surroundings: everything looked the same in terms of the environment. They even spotted a few of their classmates at the entrance of the classroom, who were going in, coming out, or wandering nearby. In fact, they even noticed a couple of kong kids they hadn’t seen before, assuming they must be new students. Both observed the environment in detail, while various thoughts crossed their minds.

“Oh... We’re not going to see those four kids anymore,” Diddy commented in a neutral tone, as he looked around.

“That’s true... They’re not here anymore,” Dixie added in the same way. “They’d be here, ready to bother us or something.”

“They’d have been waiting for us even before we arrived here,” Diddy added with a slight smile, before getting serious again and sighing. “But well... that’s how things were. Do you think we should be happy about not seeing them anymore or something, or not?”

“I’d rather think nothing about them,” Dixie replied with a shrug and the same tone. “I still don’t know what to think. I can only say that... at least I hope they are resting in peace.”

"You're right... It seems we just have to find peace coming here and... maybe remember them."

Both continued looking around before proceeding towards the classroom. Suddenly, someone called them by surprise.

"Hello. Are you Diddy and Dixie?"

They both turned to look, and saw a small group of kong boys and girls, who were greeting them. They seemed to be new children, as they had never seen them before.

"Oh, hello," Diddy and Dixie replied simultaneously. "Yes, it's us."

"Mrs. Wrinkly had talked a lot about you," one of the children told them. "She said you were missing and that you recently returned to this island."

"Ah, yes, that's what happened," Diddy replied with a slight smile. "We returned last week."

"Are you new?" Dixie asked them curiously.

"Yes, we were transferred to this school," another of the children replied, smiling at them. "And you're Mrs. Wrinkly's great-grandchildren, right?"

"Only him, not me," Dixie replied with a few light laughs, pointing to Diddy.

"And you are from this island?" Diddy also asked them curiously.

"No, I came from an island near this one," one of the girls replied.

"I do live here, though I didn't move here long ago," another of the boys added. "I used to live on a faraway island."

"Oh, so you really are new," Diddy commented, smiling back at them.

Suddenly, they all noticed from a distance that the other children were hurrying to get into the classroom, with Wrinkly nearby.

"Come here, children, let's start!" Wrinkly exclaimed from a distance, beckoning to everyone outside.

"Oh, let's go, let's go, we have to go in now," one of the kong children who were talking to Diddy and Dixie said.

The kong children ran towards the classroom. Meanwhile, Diddy and Dixie looked at each other smiling and shrugged one last time, before starting to walk towards the classroom as well. The atmosphere felt quite peaceful, and even those new children gave them good vibes as a first impression.

Before entering the classroom, they both looked at each other again and smiled upon knowing that they had not been in that place for a long time.

"Uh, by the way, Dixie, I wanted to tell you something," Diddy said before moving towards the classroom. "How about we... go somewhere this afternoon?"

"Oh, yes. That sounds like a good idea," Dixie replied with some excitement. "We haven't had any dates here on DK Island yet."

"Alright, then it's a plan," Diddy added, smiling. "Where would you like to go?... How about going to the waterfalls?"

"Yes, that sounds good," Dixie nodded. "We haven't been there in a long time... Oh, and this time we won't have any problems."

"Don't worry, this time we're really going to have our date," Diddy said with a small laugh.

"And now as a couple," Dixie added in the same way, before giving him a kiss on the cheek and making him blush a little.

They both smiled at each other again before entering the classroom. As expected, the rest of their classmates looked at them in amazement, seeing them after such a long time. Some of those children, including those from previous years, greeted them, some from afar and others approached to ask what had happened to them. Likewise, Wrinkly welcomed them back with big hugs. Then, Diddy and Dixie went to sit in their seats.

The class started as usual. Although Diddy and Dixie were a bit behind on the study topics, Wrinkly had set out to help them later so they wouldn't feel lost. During break times, Wrinkly also stayed to closely monitor to ensure there were no issues among the students. Wrinkly even mentioned the case of Jemky's quartet again and gave a talk to her students about the topic, telling them she was available to listen if any problems arose. Diddy and Dixie felt quite calm, especially Diddy, who felt that it even wasn't just a normal day. They even socialized a bit with the other children, especially the new ones.

At the end of the class, Wrinkly said goodbye to all her students and watched them until she was sure everyone was heading home, even inspecting the areas near Kong Kollege to ensure there was nothing unusual. Meanwhile, Diddy and Dixie were able to go to their respective homes without any problems, not without reminding each other of their plan for later that day.

Just as Diddy and Dixie had agreed in the morning, they were going to have a date together. They were so excited to be able to go out together on their island, this time without any worries.

Both Diddy and Dixie were getting ready in their respective homes before heading out. Diddy said goodbye to Donkey, who had accompanied him to the door and given him a few dating tips, despite Diddy having already had several dates with Dixie on Hurricane Island. Meanwhile, Dixie was with Tiny, Kiddy, and Chunky, who were all happy for her and Diddy.

Then, both left their houses and started heading to their meeting point, which was none other than where they were supposed to meet long ago: near the waterfalls. Of course, they were going to remember how badly that time had turned out, but they didn't give it any importance now that everything was much better between both of them.

Later, the two arrived at the place where they had agreed to meet. Diddy spotted Dixie in the distance and couldn't help but feel as excited as if it were the first time they were going out together.

“Dixie!” Diddy exclaimed upon seeing her arrive and heading towards her.

“Diddy!” she replied in the same way.

Just like in the morning, they ran towards each other when they saw one another, and hugged with excitement once they met. They looked into each other’s eyes and smiled, happy to be together without any worries this time.

“Let’s go, Dix,” Diddy said, smiling and taking her hand.

The two continued on their way until they reached the waterfalls they loved to visit, where they used to have so much fun.

“We’re finally back here, Diddy,” Dixie said, smiling with excitement.

“And now without any obstacles,” Diddy added with a small laugh, before giving Dixie a quick, affectionate hug.

“Oh, by the way, Diddy,” she said, taking out a tiny box she was carrying, which was covered in pink glitter. Then, she handed it to Diddy. “This was for you... Yeah, it’s very late, but... I was going to give it to you the last time we were supposed to meet here.”

Diddy took the small box and looked at it with some amazement as he opened it to find a note inside. Soon after, he gave a little laugh and then adjusted his cap, from which he pulled out another small box.

“Hey, what a coincidence,” Diddy commented before handing her the box he had brought. “I also wanted to show you this. Take it.”

Dixie was initially confused, but then she recognized the small box Diddy had given her: it was the same one she had seen in his hands back when he planned to confess his feelings.

“But what’s this?” Dixie asked, holding the small box.

“It’s the little box I told you I was going to give you that time,” Diddy replied.

With great curiosity, both opened the small boxes they had and read the notes inside. They couldn’t help but laugh a little after seeing what was written, as they had already told each other what they had written before. Dixie’s note said:

"Diddy, you're my best friend, you have become someone special to me, I really care about you and I like spending time with you. It's hard for me to say this to your face, Diddy, but really... I like you."

While Diddy’s simply said:

"I like you, Dixie"

They looked at each other and gave small, embarrassed laughs seeing each other’s notes, giving playful nudges.

“I told you I’m not good at being romantic,” Diddy said, finishing his laugh after seeing the word count difference.

“Hey, I would’ve been excited to see this back then anyway,” Dixie replied, also finishing her laugh with Diddy. But then she looked at his note again and sighed more seriously. “Can you imagine if we had seen these back then?... Or well, we’re past that now, but anyway,” she added, smiling a little again.

“Hey, what’s important is the present,” Diddy responded, smiling back more calmly. “And now we’re together and safe,” he added, gently caressing her hair.

Dixie looked at Diddy again and smiled back the same way before hugging him with so much affection, and he reciprocated. Then they looked into each other’s eyes, still not parted and happy to be like this as they had hoped.

“I love you, Diddy,” she said, caressing his face.

“I love you too, Dix,” he replied in the same way. “I love you so much.”

They got closer again and shared a sweet kiss, which they enjoyed greatly, now without any worries, on DK Island and in one of their favorite places. As they parted, both Diddy and Dixie looked at each other, feeling a unique excitement at that moment of being together.

After their romantic moment, the young kong couple proceeded with their date, starting to walk towards the lagoon with waterfalls. They began by walking, then started running, playfully shoving and laughing along the way. Finally, they were happy to share quality time together with as much tranquility as never before... With everything they had been through, they were glad to know they had managed to be fine again, and they just longed to keep achieving many things together, as they both wished.

Chapter End Notes

We made it to the end!!! Well... there's just one extra chapter left, which you'll see what it's about soon.

But yes, this is the end of this story :) If you've made it this far, thank you for reading and, most of all... for your patience <3 The good stuff took a long time to arrive, but it finally did. This story has given me great moments over the past few years. Although... even if some scenes were painful to write, made me angry, or even traumatized me, the good ones excited me a lot, especially this whole ending where things finally got resolved :3

As I mentioned at the beginning, this might be the only long story I ever write, because it was so exhausting too. If I write something else, it might just be one-shots or short stories... and with less drama and conflict than this fanfic. But still, finishing it was an achievement for me :3

Thanks for reading <3

P.S.: Well, this is something extra for this translated version of the fanfic. I thought it would take me less time, but it took me almost eight months to finish the entire translation!!! It was a bit more difficult than I thought, but still, finishing it was another achievement for me :3

Thank you again for reading <3 and sorry if my English was not perfect.

Extra: One Month Later

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

About a month later...

"What?!" Diddy exclaimed as he felt the circulation go down to his feet as he read a note. "It can't be! Donkey!"

"Holy heavens!" Wrinkly exclaimed, looking too worried. "How could that happen?!"

The Kong family was gathered on the beach... Although this time, they were all scared and worried. A few hours ago, Diddy and Dixie had been worried about Donkey, since it was very late and he was not yet returning home, so they had gone to look for him. When they arrived at the beach, they had only found an alarming scene: a Donkey's beach chair torn to pieces and several footprints surrounding it and, as if that were not enough, there was a note on the pieces of the chair, which said:

"To the yellow-bellied, land-lubbing Kong Family:

Hah-arrrrh! We got the big monkey!

If you want him back, you scurvy dogs, you'll have to hand over the banana hoard!

Kaptain K. Rool"

Everyone, especially Diddy, was too worried about what they saw. After so long, they did not imagine that they would encounter something like this again, especially kremlings.

"I thought we'd seen the last of that old rascal K. Rool a long time ago," Wrinkly said.

"Well, I suppose we'd better give him the bananas, wouldn't we?" Cranky added, worried too.

"What?! What are you saying?" Diddy exclaimed, looking oddly at Cranky. "After all we had to do to get them back last time? Donkey would go crazy if he lost the bananas again!"

"Don't you have better ideas, boy?" Cranky demanded. "And what about Donkey?!"

"We have to rescue him, of course," Diddy and Dixie replied simultaneously.

"Wait a minute," Cranky said, staring at him. "What do you mean by 'we have'?"

The entire Kong family looked at each other, without changing their worried faces.

"I don't think you can count on me, dudes," Funky said, taking a few steps back. "I don't like adventures, sorry."

"And I think I'm a bit old for that sort of thing," Wrinkly added, worried, too.

"And I'm sure I won't either," Cranky added, showing some indecision. "I'm no longer in my time to face these kinds of events, much less dealing with kremlings."

All the other kongs muttered similar things, except for Diddy and Dixie, who just looked at everyone and reread the note K. Rool had left. Suddenly, unable to hold his calm any longer, Diddy looked up at everyone before speaking.

"Then I'll go!" Diddy exclaimed in a tone of absolute firmness, earning a few astonished looks from the rest. "I went with Donkey on our last adventure, so I'll go for him now."

Immediately, everyone looked at Diddy with various expressions: some with bewilderment, while others with too much concern. Suddenly, Cranky even started to emit some small laughs.

"You?" Cranky asked again with a look of weirdness. "But you're just... a short stature monkey, how do you think you're going on that mission all by yourself? It's the kremlings, kid!"

"What are you saying?" Diddy exclaimed, feeling somewhat insulted by Cranky's words. "Of course I can go!"

"Don't call him that!" Dixie came out to defend him. "Diddy can be as capable as a hero, of course he can!"

"Do you believe that?" Cranky stressed again. "Do you think he'll be able to face those kremlings and all their traps, all by himself?"

"He won't be by himself!" Dixie replied, speaking firmly. "I'm going with him!"

Everyone, especially Diddy, turned their gazes to Dixie suddenly and were shocked.

"Hey, what are you saying?!" Diddy exclaimed to her, getting a bit flustered. "Facing those Kremlings is dangerous, Dixie!"

"Are you afraid to go, or not?" Dixie asked him seriously.

"Of course not!" Diddy replied firmly.

"Well, neither am I," Dixie replied. "Don't try to argue; if you're going, I'm going with you"

Diddy stood still for a moment, while Dixie continued to look at him intently, showing the same firm attitude as him in embarking on rescuing Donkey. After all, he seemed to be Donkey's only hope at that moment, and Dixie his only willing companion to help him. Even if he couldn't deny that he feared something might happen to either of them, he couldn't let so much time pass either, so after thinking about it more, he nodded in agreement towards Dixie, receiving a slight but firm smile from her.

"Then we'll go..." Diddy said, showing himself with all certainty along with Dixie.

The other kongs looked much more worried, but also amazed by both of their attitudes.

"Well, go ahead then," Cranky said, sighing and shrugging. "Let's see how capable you two will be against those Kremlin lizards. And I just hope you both come back safe and sound, and bring that lazy Donkey back with you."

"We'll bring him back, you'll see," Diddy said firmly, as Dixie joined him, and both nodded as a sign of reassurance.

The other kongs, unable to stop them, only gave them moral support and encouragement for the adventure they were about to undertake. Wrinkly gave them warm smiles and gestures of support as if she were a mother. Funky, Lanky, and Swanky bumped fists with them as a gesture of support. Candy also hurried to give them support, while praying for Donkey to be okay. Tiny, Kiddy, and Chunky, on their part, were quite worried but wanted to trust Dixie and Diddy, believing that everything would be fine since they had seen them survive together before.

Then, the young Kong couple proceeded to start preparing everything for their adventure. Even though they knew they were going to take risks, they still maintained their firm attitude to go in search of Donkey and bring him back, and being the two of them together in it, they wouldn't have so much to fear...

****THE END...***

It continues in Diddy's Kong Quest...

Chapter End Notes

Well, here is the end... :3 Thank you for reading.

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!